

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XL. No. 11

17th September 1970

MORALITY AND PANTHEISM

[This article by “A Humble Chela of a Great Master” was first published in *The Theosophist* for November 1883 and was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for February 1945.

—EDS.]

QUESTIONS have been raised in several quarters as to the inefficiency of Pantheism (which term is intended to include Esoteric Buddhism, Adwaitee Vedantism, and other similar religious systems) to supply a sound basis of morality.

The philosophical assimilation of *meum* and *tuum*, it is urged, must of necessity be followed by their practical confusion, resulting in the sanction of theft, robbery, etc. This line of argument points, however, most unmistakably to the co-existence of the objection with an all but utter ignorance of the systems objected to, in the critic's mind, as we shall show by and by. The ultimate sanction of morality, as is well known, is derived from a desire for the attainment of happiness and escape from misery. But schools differ in their estimate of happiness. Exoteric religions base their morality on the hope of reward and fear of punishment at the hands of an Omnipotent Ruler of the Universe by following the rules he has at his pleasure laid down for the obedience of his helpless subjects; in some cases, however, religions of later growth have made morality depend on the sentiment of gratitude to that Ruler for benefits received. The worthlessness, not to speak of the mischievousness, of such systems of morality is almost self-evident. As a type of morality founded on hope and fear, we shall take an instance from the Christian Bible. “He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.” The duty of supporting the poor is here made to depend upon prudential motives of laying by for a time when the “giver to the poor” will be

incapable of taking care of himself. But the *Mahabharata* says that "He that desireth a return for his good deeds loseth all merit; he is like a merchant bartering his goods." The true springs of morality lose their elasticity under the pressure of such criminal selfishness; all pure and unselfish natures will fly away from it in disgust.

To avoid such consequences attempts have been made by some recent reformers of religion to establish morality upon the sentiment of gratitude to the Lord. But it requires no deep consideration to find that in their endeavours to shift the basis of morality, these reformers have rendered morality entirely baseless. A man has to do what is represented to be a thing "dear unto the Lord" out of gratitude for the many blessings he has heaped upon him. But as a matter of fact he finds that the Lord has heaped upon him curses as well as blessings. A helpless orphan is expected to be grateful to him for having removed the props of his life, his parents, because he is told in consolation that such a calamity is but *apparently* an evil, but in reality the All-Merciful has underneath it hidden the greatest possible good. With equal reason might a preacher of the Avenging Ahriman exhort men to believe that under the *apparent* blessings of the "Merciful" Father there lurks the serpent of evil. But this gospel has yet to be preached.

The modern Utilitarians, though the range of their vision is so narrow, have sterner logic in their teachings. That which tends to a man's happiness is good, and must be followed, and the contrary to be shunned as evil. So far so good. But the practical application of the doctrine is fraught with mischief. Cribbed, cabined and confined, by rank materialism, within the short space between birth and death, the Utilitarians' scheme of happiness is merely a deformed torso, which cannot certainly be considered as the fair goddess of our devotion.

The only scientific basis of morality is to be sought for in the soul-consoling doctrines of Lord Buddha or Sri Sankaracharya. The starting point of the "pantheistic" (we use the word for want of a better one) system of morality is a clear perception of the unity of the one energy operating in the manifested Cosmos, the grand ultimate result which it is incessantly striving to produce, and the affinity of the immortal human spirit and its latent powers with that energy, and its capacity to co-operate with the one life in achieving its mighty object.

Now knowledge or *jnanam* is divided into two classes by Adwaitee philosophers — *Paroksha* and *Aparoksha*. The former kind of knowledge consists in intellectual assent to a stated proposition, the latter in the

actual realization of it. The object which a Buddhist or Adwaitee Yogi sets before himself is the realization of the oneness of existence, and the practice of morality is the most powerful means to that end, as we proceed to show. The principal obstacle to the realization of this oneness is the inborn habit of man of always placing himself at the centre of the Universe. Whatever a man might act, think or feel, the irrepressible "I" is sure to be the central figure. This, as will appear on the slightest consideration, is that which prevents every individual from filling his proper sphere in existence, where he only is exactly in place and no other individual is. The realization of this harmony is the practical or objective aspect of the GRAND PROBLEM. The practice of morality is the effort to find out this sphere; and morality indeed is the Ariadne's clue in the Cretan labyrinth in which man is placed. From the study of the sacred philosophy preached by Lord Buddha or Sri Sankara, *paroksha* knowledge (or shall we say *belief*?) in the unity of existence is derived, but without the practice of morality that knowledge cannot be converted into the highest kind of knowledge or *aparoksha jnanam*, and thus lead to the attainment of *mukti*. It availeth naught to intellectually grasp the notion of your being everything and Brahma, if it is not realized in practical acts of life. To confuse *meum* and *tuum* in the vulgar sense is but to destroy the harmony of existence by a false assertion of "I," and is as foolish as the anxiety to nourish the legs at the expense of the arms. You cannot be one with ALL, unless all your acts, thoughts and feelings synchronize with the onward march of Nature. What is meant by the *Brahmajnani* being beyond the reach of *Karma*, can be fully realized only by a man who has found out his exact position in harmony with the One Life in Nature; that man sees how a *Brahmajnani* can act only in unison with Nature and never in discord with it: to use the phraseology of our ancient writers on Occultism, a *Brahmajnani* is a real "co-worker with Nature." Not only European Sanskritists but also exoteric Yogis fall into the grievous mistake of supposing that, in the opinion of our sacred writers, a human being can escape the operation of the law of *Karma* by adopting a condition of masterly inactivity, entirely losing sight of the fact that even a rigid abstinence from physical acts does not produce inactivity on the higher astral and spiritual planes. Sri Sankara has very conclusively proved, in his Commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, that such a supposition is nothing short of a delusion. The great teacher shows there that forcibly repressing the physical body from working does not free one from *vasana* or *vritti* — the inherent inclination of the mind to work. There is a

tendency, in every department of nature, for an act to repeat itself; so the Karma acquired in the last preceding birth is always trying to forge fresh links in the chain, and thereby lead to continued material existence. This tendency can only be counteracted by unselfishly performing all the duties appertaining to the sphere in which a person is born, and that alone can produce *chitta suddhi* [purification of the mind] without which the capacity of perceiving spiritual truths can never be acquired.

A few words must here be said about the physical inactivity of the Yogi or the Mahatma. Inactivity of the physical body (*sthula sarira*) does not indicate a condition of inactivity either on the astral or the spiritual plane of action. The human spirit is in its highest state of activity in *samadhi*, and not, as is generally supposed, in a dormant, quiescent condition. And, moreover, it will be easily seen by anyone who examines the nature of occult dynamics, that a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence. When an adept has placed himself *en rapport* with the universal mind he becomes a real power in nature. Even on the objective plane of existence the difference between brain and muscular energy, in their capacity of producing wide-spread and far-reaching results, can be very easily perceived. The amount of physical energy expended by the discoverer of the steam-engine might not have been more than that expended by a hard-working day-labourer. But the practical results of the coolie's work can never be compared with the results achieved by the discovery of the steam-engine. Similarly the ultimate effects of spiritual energy are infinitely greater than those of intellectual energy.

From the above considerations it is abundantly clear that the initiatory training of a true Vedantin Raj Yogi must be the nourishing of a sleepless and ardent desire of doing all in his power for the good of mankind on the ordinary physical plane, his activity being transferred, however, to the higher astral and spiritual planes as his development proceeds. In course of time as the Truth becomes realized, the situation is rendered quite clear to the Yogi and he is placed beyond the criticism of any ordinary man. The *Mahanirvan Tantra* says:

Charanti trigunatite ko vidhir ko nishedhava.

“For one, walking beyond the three *gunas* — *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* — what duty or what restriction is there?” — in the consideration of men, walled in on all sides by the objective plane of existence. This

does not mean that a Mahatma can or will ever neglect the laws of morality, but that he, having unified his individual nature with Great Nature herself, is constitutionally incapable of violating any one of the laws of Nature, and no man can constitute himself a judge of the conduct of the Great One without knowing the laws of all the planes of Nature's activity. As honest men are honest without the least consideration of the criminal law, so a Mahatma is moral without reference to the law of morality.

These are, however, sublime topics: we shall before conclusion notice some other considerations which lead the "pantheist" to the same conclusions with respect to morality. Happiness has been defined by John Stuart Mill as the state of absence of opposition. Manu gives the definition in more forcible terms:

Sarvam paravasam dukkham
Sarvam atmavasam sukham
Idam jnayo samasena
Lakshanam sukhadukkhayoh

"Every kind of subjugation to another is pain, and subjugation to one's self is happiness: in brief, this is to be known as the characteristic marks of the two." Now, it is universally admitted that the whole system of Nature is moving in a particular direction, and this direction, we are taught, is determined by the composition of two forces, namely, the one acting from that pole of existence ordinarily called "matter" towards the other pole called "spirit," and the other in the opposite direction. The very fact that Nature is moving shows that these two forces are not equal in magnitude. The plane on which the activity of the first force predominates is called in occult treatises the "ascending arc," and the corresponding plane of the activity of the other force is styled the "descending arc." A little reflection will show that the work of evolution begins on the descending arc and works its way upwards through the ascending arc. From this it follows that the force directed towards spirit is the one which must, though not without hard struggle, ultimately prevail. This is the great directing energy of Nature, and, although disturbed by the operation of the antagonistic force, it is this that gives the law to her; the other is merely its negative aspect, for convenience regarded as a separate agent. If an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force. We need not say that such a result

would be the very reverse of pleasurable. The only way, therefore, in which happiness might be attained is by merging one's nature in great Mother Nature, and following the direction in which she herself is moving: this again can only be accomplished by assimilating men's individual conduct with the triumphant force of Nature, the other force being always overcome with terrific catastrophes. The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality. Obedience to this universal law, after ascertaining it, is true religion, which has been defined by Lord Buddha as "the realization of the True."

An example will serve to illumine the position. Can a practical student of pantheism, or, in other words, an occultist, utter a falsehood? Now, it will be readily admitted that life manifests itself by the power of acquiring sensation, temporary dormancy of that power being suspended animation. If a man receives a particular series of sensations and pretends they are other than they really are, the result is that he exercises his will-power in opposition to a law of Nature on which, as we have shown, life depends, and thereby becomes suicide on a minor scale. Space prevents us to pursue the subject any further, but if all the ten deadly sins mentioned by Manu and Buddha are examined in the light sought to be focused here, we dare say the result will be quite satisfactory.

A QUESTION ON THE ABOVE

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist* for March 1884.—EDS.]

The author quotes disapprovingly a sentence from the Christian Bible—"He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." He sees in it an immoral motive as an incentive to doing good; but could not the sentence be considered as a symbolical affirmation of the law expounded in the above article on the subject of happiness and morality?

When giving to the poor, *i.e.*, in practising charity, man places himself in harmony with that grand law of Nature—*Solidarity*. Therefore, acting in communion with the whole, he places himself in the condition of happiness indicated by the author, and thus receives in return for his deed a gift which is not *arbitrary*, but which in fact is the accomplishment of the law. Understood in

this way that sentence is not in disaccord with Theosophy or with Occultism.

I have remarked that several of the sayings of Jesus are thus illuminated by the light of Occultism. I must even add that they are quite unacceptable without that key. I shall be grateful to the author if he answers me.

J. K. O.

I hasten to reply to the question raised in the foregoing letter. The Christian Scriptures are, no doubt, capable of yielding very satisfactory answers, quite unsuspected by the generality of the so-called Christians, if approached from the Occult standpoint. But that was not the subject to which I addressed myself in my article on "Morality and Pantheism"; my object was simply to show the unsoundness of the basis upon which Morality is made to depend in the current Christian faith. Helping the helpless poor certainly generates a beneficent force reacting upon Humanity as a whole — the Lord, the true Adam — of which the helper forms a unit. But how few would read that meaning in the sentence quoted?

It is quite true that a student of the true philosophy will be able to evolve a perfect system of Morality from the nebulous mass of whatever religious system he may be surrounded by. But the fact must always be borne in mind that the vivifying influence of the Esoteric Doctrine is absolutely indispensable before the floating mist can form itself into a pure crystalline sphere. I may take this opportunity to make an attempt to dispel the inchoate dissatisfaction that seems to be slowly spreading its shadowy wings over many a Western mind in regard to the attitude of the Theosophical Movement towards Esoteric Christianity. It is as reasonable to complain that our Society does not come forward, lance in rest, as a champion of Esoteric Christianity, as to find fault with the wind of heaven for not seeking admission into our own private chamber, all the casements of which lying in the way of the wind we have taken care to shut. The Theosophical Society will belie its name if it wedded itself to any particular form of faith. But, as the humble exponent of the Divine Esoteric Doctrine, it is the supporter of all religions founded on that rock of truth, and who shall say that there is no form of Christianity which is so founded? But, until the windows are thrown open to let in the light, until a gallant band of Christians stand up for their lost Gnosticism, we are quite powerless. In the meantime, however, we have a duty to perform, to

prevent a crime from being punished by another crime and by greater criminals — to save, if possible, the still quivering life impulse in the old Asiatic religions from being crushed out by the dead weight of Missionary Christianity, the worse than Islamic Iconoclasm of our modern days.

A HUMBLE CHELA OF A GREAT MASTER

MOST IMPORTANT of all is a deep and living feeling of harmony and brotherhood. A union in name has no force or power. Eighteen years ago we formed the union, the attempt to create a nucleus of a universal brotherhood, and since then we should have made some progress towards realizing what was then but a sound. Such an actual brotherhood is an important fact, its absence a very great obstruction and difficulty.

Too many have failed to make brotherhood a real thing in their life, leaving it merely as a motto on their shield. Our brotherhood must naturally include men and women of very various characters, each with different views of nature, having personal characteristics which may or may not grate upon others as the case may be. The first step then to take is to accept and tolerate personally all your fellows. In no other way can we begin to approach the realization of the great ideal. The absence of this acceptation of others is a mortal defect. It leads to suspicion, and suspicion ruptures our union. In an assembly where harmony is absent and brotherhood is not, the labours of those assembled are made almost *nil*, for an almost impenetrable cloud rolls out and covers the mental plane of all present. But let harmony return, and then the collective mind of all becomes the property of each, sending down into the mind of everyone a benediction which is full of knowledge.

—W. Q. JUDGE (1893)

THE CHANGING FACE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

II.—WHO, OR WHAT, WILL REPLACE GOD?

IF there is no God as Creator, Ruler and Judge of all, with power to save or to damn, are we alone in the vast, moving Nature, just a speck of the whole, unrelated to any other, with no future, no vision, no power? Is the whole of Nature a vast assembly of specks of consciousness, each one fighting for its own existence, caught in the great whirlwind of change and chance? What difference is there between the speck of sand and the greatest mind of humanity? If we are alone, where does the vast knowledge that there is in the world come from, and how does it pass from generation to generation?

We must replace the idea of the God who cannot be questioned, by Nature itself which, as a Master wrote, is "the sum total of everything visible and invisible." It must be questioned if we are to survive. We know that in the past history of mankind some scientists, philosophers and humanitarians have struggled to learn the law of survival in the real sense, and have left their knowledge in strange tongues, calling present-day men to begin to realize the immensely long past that man has been man, and likewise showing him how knowledge gained can be passed on to others for thousands and thousands of years. This knowledge is embedded in geometrical signs and glyphs or in numbers. Numerology in its finest sense is uncanny in its perfection as a guide to meaning and to knowledge. H.P.B. wrote in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 634-35):

We would have...scientists, theologians, spiritualists... realize that there was true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before this modern era. We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity.

Also,

...unity of everything in the universe implies and justifies our belief in the existence of a knowledge at once scientific, philosophical and religious, showing the necessity and actuality of the connection of man and all things in the universe with each other; which knowledge, therefore, becomes essentially RELIGION. ("Is Theosophy a Religion?": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*, p. 8)

One great lesson was learnt in the far past and is being unveiled more and more today. That is, that though everything in Nature — creatures, men, stars and worlds — is born, flourishes, decays and dies, yet some seed remains to form future creatures, men, stars and worlds. The ancient scientist-philosophers found out that this is a universal law; that birth, life, decay-death is universal and is always followed by regeneration. This is caused by that mysterious thing called Life which operates in all forms from the smallest to the greatest, which, incidentally, is made up of the tiniest specks. When one form becomes unusable by Life, it breaks it or leaves it and enters another form in which it can express itself more freely and deeply, for Nature is “a series of progressive awakenings.” And Nature is wonderful. Jesus called attention to the glory of the lilies of the field and said that “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” The Buddha referred to the “emeralds on the peacock’s train” and the “pheasant’s pencilled neck”; also to the life-giving milk of the mother and the “white drops” of the sting of the snake.

Whereas these thoughts appeal to the emotion-heart, we also need the mental approach if we are to understand. The ancients explained life itself and manifestation in terms of geometrical figures, the point, the triangle and the circle. From the triangle all other forms can be made; it is the basic figure in Nature, and Nature geometrizes, said Plato. Here is the key to proportion in all forms from the pyramid to the crystal. Numbers are inseparable from forms, and Pythagoras spoke of the universe as mathematical.

Behind the triangle, so to speak, is the Point from which Life radiates, that Point in the vastnesses of Space which is the beginning of the manifestation of forms. This Point has no definite circumference taken as an abstract point, but taken as the beginning of a universe it has its “Ring Pass-Not” or circumference which, as man is the centre of Life, is nowhere and yet everywhere. Whether we stand in Australia or at the far North or on the Moon, our horizon is the same, we are equidistant from it. It is essential for us to understand this.

Philosophy, however, could never have formed its conception of a logical, universal, and absolute Deity if it had no Mathematical Point within the Circle to base its speculations upon. . . . it is because it has so unwisely rejected the Pythagorean Monad and geometrical figures, that Christian theology has evolved its self-created human and personal God. (*S.D.*, I. 613)

But the life within the forms must not be lost sight of. In ancient myths and symbols the inner side of Nature was represented by gods and goddesses, and every form, mineral, vegetable and animal, was said to be the outer covering of Spirit, the degree of intelligence varying according to the unfoldment achieved within that form. In time, the attitude towards these gods and goddesses changed from that of reverence of the Spirit to worship, and then to prayers for help or appeasement. "Pray not," the Buddha said. The idea of the forgiveness of sins and the Wailing Wall of the Jews stand as totem polls at the opposite end of the attitude of reverence and recognition.

Yet the hard fact remains that when two atoms unite to form a molecule that molecule has a life of its own different from that of the two atoms. So, any form in the world has an existence of its own while the form remains, and there is the guiding and learning intelligence in that form. Hence the so-called legends of salamanders, undines, or nature-spirits, and the old custom in India and China of telling a tree a day or so in advance that it was due to be cut down — the idea being that the tree-sprite could leave the tree.

To help us to understand this aspect of Nature, H.P.B. told us that the whole of Nature is governed, controlled and guided by an endless series of hierarchies — the name given to the different degrees of intelligence functioning in the different forms of life. St. Paul spoke of principalities and powers, and so does the Church today. All these, we read,

are entitled to the grateful reverence of Humanity, however, and man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas*, by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with nature* in the cyclic task. (*S.D.*, I. 280)

Between the highest Intelligence and the lowest, which seeks only for self-preservation, there is a great range of intelligences. The higher the Intelligence, the less self-centred it is, until we reach the condition where that Intelligence is merely the guiding power behind Nature's laws. The stars do not leave their established course, for there is "a Power divine which moves to good. . . ." (*The Light of Asia*, Book VIII). There is no favouritism in the workings of natural law. Learn those laws and they can be used. But woe to the man who uses them for working against Nature. Nature's laws are constructive and destructive, life-giving and death-dealing — the twin powers of life — and man can become part of the constructive force or align himself with the de-

structive and become lost in that destruction.

To become a co-worker with Nature in a true sense means to reach the acme of human perfection. Those powers one has gained must be used for others, not for oneself, and only when every iota of selfishness has been lost irretrievably can one join the band of the truly Great who remain within the sphere of our earth as Guides and Helpers lest any sore-footed pilgrim lose his way in this limitless desert of illusion and matter called earth-life. The great Teachers watch and sacrifice themselves to help humanity take the right course. All these are worthy of man's reverence, but it is useless to appeal for their help in the way we have been taught to appeal to gods and goddesses.

The whole of Nature is, therefore, the Temple of the Spirit or of the ONE LIFE, impersonal, immutable, and therefore utterly trustworthy, shining with such Light that we cannot understand it, but which illumines and purifies. We contact it in moments of upliftment, of ecstasy or adoration. Far beyond any idea of sentiment it is rooted in the depth of Nature, and communion with it is the nearest we shall ever get to understanding this side of our earthly life. In his poem "Night Thoughts," the poet Gascoigne has expressed this very graphically. Looking at the midnight sky, he wrote:

I raise my spellbound head, and face to face
With what I cannot name, I worship and adore.

And Elizabeth Barrett Browning's words, quoted in the first part of this article, bear repetition:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God.

There begins to dawn in the heart a feeling of Love. Love is the binding power throughout manifestation, for love is union. Love expands and embraces; hatred shrivels and destroys; indifference leads to annihilation through passivity. Therefore the old idea of God must be replaced by that of the inner glory of Nature; worship is reverence for that Nature — making ourselves co-workers with it — with our mind and spirit on the invisible side within all forms, and with the recognition that we alone can do the work on ourselves necessary for following the evolutionary law of the human kingdom. We can do this with the help of all the great Sages of the past and the present, as love begins to awaken in our heart in gratitude for the love poured down on us by them. And we can go on and on. We have lost the

figure-head, the "gigantic nightmare" of a personal god, and gained a glimpse of GODHEAD as the Divine Principle in all, to be contacted by union with a flower or a star, with a criminal as with a saint. We have lost a Creator, but have learnt that we are creators ourselves. What shall we create? It is a fearful responsibility, but fearlessness is the first necessary virtue.

IF there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite, like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahmanic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature. . . .

May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura-Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea!

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

FROM RIGHT ENDEAVOUR TO RIGHT RESIGNATION

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION for the earnest soul who tries to walk the path H.P.B. showed is this: "What will keep me going in my endeavour to reach to Wisdom and to acquire the strength to serve always the Immortal Holy Ones?" Where can we find a better answer than in the Message of Theosophy, our most priceless inheritance? And who can improve upon the one we quote from a memorable article by H.P.B.? In it we see the expression of the injunction of *The Voice of the Silence* — "Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered." Admitting that "imperfect and faulty is my nature; many and glaring are my shortcomings," she goes on to say:

For thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw any Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, *I have never once denied or even doubted Him*, not even in thought. Never a reproach or murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials. . . . Unswerving devotion to Him who embodies the duty traced for me, and belief in the Wisdom — collectively, of that grand, mysterious, yet actual Brotherhood of holy men — is my only merit, and the cause of my success in Occult philosophy. . . . ("The Theosophical Mahatmas": *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*)

Real success in the Higher Life depends upon Devotion to the chosen path. Unless a man has consecrated himself whole-heartedly to walking the path, he will swerve from his devotion. Unless one looks at events and persons with the single eye of the Spirit one will not be able to see straight. All humanity is checked by its own Karma, but in the case of those who choose to tread the path, as H.P.B. points out in this article, "Karma, instead of having to be distributed throughout his long life, falls upon him in a block and crushes him with its whole weight." What, then, is the safeguard?

He who believes in what he professes and in his Master, will stand it and come out of the trial victorious; he *who doubts*, the coward who fears to receive his just dues and tries to avoid justice being done — FAILS. He will not escape Karma just the same, but he will only lose that for which he has risked its untimely visits.

Unswerving devotion to the self-chosen Discipline and to Those from

whom that Discipline emanates is indicated by H.P.B. as our plank of salvation in the turbulent waters of *Samsara*. In the midst of death people live. We, the aspirants to Wisdom and Sacrifice, live in the midst of spiritual death. But as Life ever is, while death is but a phenomenon of Life, our victory is assured if we keep to the rules of the Great Game we are playing, and walk steadfastly on the Path of Discipleship.

It has been pointed out that dual is the manifestation of the inimical force we have to encounter and to overcome. First, our kin and friends and fellow-men who constitute the society in which we live, become the channels of our Karma. The voices of all and sundry are allowed to deflect us from our course. Not all such voices are nefarious and wicked. Many among such voices are the charming notes of the birds, who, for all their beauty, do belong to the animal kingdom. The second inimical manifestation is the force of Desire, *Rajo-guna*, which circulates in our lower nature.

The means of surmounting the first obstacle lies in the perception that the aspirant to God-like Wisdom is going North while others are going East or West or South. Soon or late these may change their course to their own betterment, but we cannot change ours without dire calamity. The second fact to hold on to as a conviction is that our kin and friends must rise to the plane of Theosophy: we cannot descend to theirs of sense-life — which, once again, does not mean a life of evil and wickedness. It becomes necessary therefore to apply to ourselves the injunction — “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Those who succeed do so because they “carry no personal luggage of human transitory sentiments along with them,” says H.P.B.

The second is a more formidable obstacle. *Rajas*, the force of love-hate, is the constant enemy — *nitya-veri*, Krishna calls it in the *Gita* — whom we have to overcome. Our many desires are also Karmic results of our own thoughts, wills and feelings. From the past, through the present, to the future these must stream forth; our day-to-day Karma adding to the storehouse of the past and changing that assemblage for the better or the worse.

Neither the past which is gone, nor the future which is to come can be touched save through the present. The right attitude to Karmic precipitations or Karmic opportunities is to regard these two as one with a dual aspect. Right resignation follows right endeavour. We cannot say “this is for the best” unless the result so described issues from correct and intelligent effort in the immediate past. “This is not only as I

deserve, but also as I desire," can be said by him who feels at the core of his being that his endeavours were fully and well made, with and under the circumstances, and that they ultimately produced the result. So, from Right Exertion of the past is born Right Resignation in the present.

Bhishma, the embodiment of Dharma, asserts that "Exertion is greater than Destiny" and expounds the doctrine of *how* it can be made so. As to the future — a firm position, hopeful and confident, must be assumed if our exertion in the present is to bear nourishing fruits in the hereafter. To say and to repeat — "Come what may, Theosophy first, Theosophy last, in life, through death, into life again," is to bring to birth that Right Attitude which is one of "Unswerving devotion." Without such Right Attitude there cannot be Right Exertion, and without the latter how can there be Right Resignation, which is perception of the Justice of Karma — the Unerring?

THERE ARE nowadays many professors of occultism, just as years ago there was a numerous brood of those who pretended to know about the philosopher's stone. Both, however, were and are learned chiefly in repeating what they have heard of as occultism, with no substance or reality underneath all the profession. Now as then the mere incidentals of the true occultist's practice are thought of, spoken about, and pursued. Phenomena or the power to produce them constitute the end and aim of these searchers' efforts. But seek as we may, we will not find among them real knowledge, real experience, true initiation. Being on the wrong path, deluded by false light, they cannot do aught but mystify, annoy, and deceive those who put their trust in them. During the days of Rosicrucian fame there was some excuse for the mass of seekers, but since the old Hindu works have become gradually known to everyone, that exculpation is at an end; for on every hand the note of warning is sounded, and everywhere are signs that show in what direction lies the true path. Particularly is this so in that wonderful book, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In it, however void of phenomena, however unattractive in respect to bait for psychic emotion, it points out the way, declares the mystic science, true devotion, right action.

—W. Q. JUDGE

“BE THOU ONLY THE IMMEDIATE AGENT”

How OFTEN do we take these words from the *Bhagavad-Gita* (XI. 33) to apply only to one person, Arjuna, and one set of circumstances, *i.e.*, one particular battle in which he had to fight—the result of which was predetermined by Krishna!

But suppose we begin to take the sentence as applying to ourselves, in our everyday life, at all times and places. It would give us a totally different basis for thought, feeling and action, as also rid us of indecision, fear of consequences, and selfishness.

Arjuna's feelings are affected by the thought of destroying his kin, fear of the consequences that must ensue and how hollow victory, when gained, would seem to him. Here is an important point: he is looking at one consequence of one action, namely, what would happen if he fought the battle. He has ignored what would happen if he refused to fight.

Is not this what we do? We seldom try to visualize the consequences of *inaction* in some event, and therefore we lack discrimination.

We often speak of Karma, the great law of cause and effect, realizing in the mind that what comes to everyone is the due effect of the past, and that none can stay its course. But here Krishna speaks of himself as Karma, for he says that all those to be killed in the battle “have been already slain by me.” Hence it is their Karma to die in that way.

Who shall bring something that is preordained to pass? The one whose *dharma* it is, the one who is placed there by Karma. And it is better to perform one's duty, even if full of faults!

Therefore we must find out the difference between an “agent” and an independent actor. An agent is one who follows a certain path laid down for him by another. In doing so, he has, or should have, no personal or selfish wishes, etc., for he is only the agent on whom it has fallen to perform a certain piece of work. A tree, for example, which falls down and destroys someone is an agent bringing Karmic precipitation at the proper time and place and to the proper person; it has no feelings attached to the action. Neither has the sun which shines on the just *and* the unjust, on the health-giving crops and the poisonous weeds.

What should be our attitude, then, to acts that need to be performed? If an action presents itself to us, and there is no escape except personal cowardice, then we have to ignore all personal feeling regarding the action. We have to act with neither liking nor disliking, but because it is our *dharma*. In that way we are embroiled neither in the consequences

of the action nor in the consequences of inaction. In another place Krishna tells Arjuna to dedicate all his actions to Him; this is another way of saying the same thing. We are also told not to bother about results. It is action which counts; the results of both action and inaction will follow of themselves.

Therefore, it would seem, we need a philosophical basis by which we can determine what is right action and what is right *inaction*, for there are two kinds of action and inaction. We can act wrongly, inharmoniously and personally, or we can refuse to act in a righteous cause as well as in an unrighteous cause. When in doubt, therefore, we must earnestly decide what is our *duty*, not our *wish*. False duties are many and absorb us all the time. So, "What is my business?", "Am I concerned here?" are questions to consider at every stage. Whatever conclusion we come to will be in terms of our nature. If we make a wrong choice, we shall meet the same circumstances again and again, until we judge aright.

Remember, feeling should follow thought; thought must not become lost in feeling.

Consider these quotations:

Both action and inaction may find room in thee; thy body agitated, thy mind tranquil, thy Soul as limpid as a mountain lake. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 32)

Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.

Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee. . . . Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat. . . . (*Light on the Path*, pp. 9, 11)

"BE THOU ONLY THE IMMEDIATE AGENT."

SELF-INTEREST is but the survival of the animal in us. Humanity only begins for man with self-surrender.

—HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL

SHANKARA'S CATECHISM

[Reprinted from the *Oriental Department Paper* for January 1895.—EDS.]

INTRODUCTORY

IN the "Awakening to the Self,"¹ and, still more, in the "Crest-Jewel of Wisdom," Shankara the Teacher uses many words in a clear, precise, and consciously exact sense, which is not always to be gathered from the context of these two works. In the "Awakening to the Self," this is hardly an impediment, as the expression of this excellent poem is so perfect and universal; nor is there any great impediment in the first part of the "Crest-Jewel of Wisdom." But further on in the "Crest-Jewel," this is not the case. It becomes more strict and technical in meaning; and without precise definitions, much is hardly intelligible. But in the "Crest Jewel" itself these definitions are not always to be found. What is to be done, then, if we really want to understand the Teacher precisely?

Happily Shankara has left us a Key in his own work, the "Awakening to Reality," where nearly every special word of his philosophy is exactly defined. We have only to try to find the best English translation of his definitions, and we shall have a clear clue and outline to the larger work, the "Crest-Jewel," and, indeed, to the whole of Shankara's philosophy.

One thing must be remembered. This "Awakening to Reality" is what we have called it—a catechism. And in a catechism we can hardly expect the perfect poetical form and splendid imagery of works like the "Awakening to the Self." What we shall find is lucidity, accuracy, grasp, coherence; but not poetical beauty. Thus is begun:

THE AWAKENING TO REALITY

(Shankaracharya's *Tattva Bodha*)

I

To the Master, the World-Soul, the Master of seekers for union, obedience; to the teacher, the giver of wisdom. To fulfil love for those who would be free, this Awakening to Reality is addressed to them.

¹ THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1969.—EDS.

THE FOUR PERFECTIONS

We shall tell of the way of discerning reality, the perfection of freedom, for those who are fitted by possessing the Four Perfections.

What are the Four Perfections?

— The Discerning between lasting and unlasting things; No Rage for enjoying the fruit of works, either here or there; the Six Graces that follow Peace; and then the Longing to be free.

What is the Discerning between lasting and unlasting things?

— The one lasting thing is the Eternal; all, apart from it, is unlasting.

What is No Rage?

— A lack of longing for enjoyments here and in the heaven-world.

What is possession of the Perfections that follow Peace?

— Peace; Self-Control; Steadiness; Sturdiness, Confidence; Intentness.

What is Peace?

— A firm hold on emotion.

What is Self-Control?

— A firm hold on the lust of the eyes and the outward powers.

What is Steadiness?

— A following out of one's own genius.

What is Sturdiness?

— A readiness to bear opposing forces, like cold and heat, pleasure and pain.

What is Confidence?

— Confidence is a reliance on the Voice of the Teacher and Final Wisdom.

What is Intentness?

— One-pointedness of the imagination.

What is the Longing to be free?

— It is the longing: "That Freedom may be mine."

THE DISCERNING OF REALITY

These are the Four Perfections. Through these, men are fitted to discern Reality.

What is the Discerning of Reality?

— It is this: the Self is real; other than it, all is fancy.

SELF, VESTURES, VEILS, MODES

What is the Self?

— He who stands apart from the Physical, the Emotional, and the Causal Vestures; who is beyond the five Veils, who is witness of the three Modes; whose own nature is Being, Consciousness, Bliss — this is the Self.

THE THREE VESTURES

What is the Physical Vesture?

— Being formed of the five creatures fivefolded, born through works, it is the house where opposing forces like pleasure and pain are enjoyed; having these six accidents: it is, is born, grows, turns the corner, declines, perishes; such is the Physical Vesture.

What is the Emotional Vesture?

— Being formed of the five creatures not fivefolded, born through works, the perfection of the enjoyment of opposing forces like pleasure and pain, existing with its seventeen phases: the five powers of knowing; the five powers of doing; the five lives; emotion, one, the soul, one; this is the Emotional Vesture.

The five powers of knowing are: Hearing, Touch, Sight, Taste, Smell. Hearing's radiation is Space; Touch's, Air; Sight's, the Sun; Smell's, the Twin Physicians; these are the powers of knowing.

Hearing's business is the seizing of sounds; Touch's business, the seizing of contacts; Sight's business, the seizing of forms; Taste's business, the seizing of tastes; Smell's business, the seizing of odours.

The five powers of doing are: Voice, Hands, Feet, Putting-forth, Generating. Voice's radiation is the Tongue of Flame; Hands', the Master; Feet's, the Pervader; Putting-forth's, Death; Generating's, the Lord of Beings; thus the radiations of the powers of doing.

Voice's business is speaking; Hand's business is grasping things; Feet's business is going; Putting-forth's business is removing waste; Generating's business is physical enjoying.

What is the Causal Vesture?

— Being formed through ineffable, beginningless unwisdom, it is the Substance and Cause of the two Vestures; though unknowing as to its own nature, it is yet in nature unerring; this is the Causal Vesture.

THE THREE MODES

What are the Three Modes?

— The Modes of Waking, Dreaming, Dreamlessness.

What is the Mode, Waking?

— It is where knowledge comes through Hearing and the other

knowing powers, whose business is sound and the other perceptions; this is the Waking Mode.

When attributing itself to the Physical Vesture, the Self is called the Pervading.

Then what is the Mode, Dreaming?

— The world that presents itself in rest, generated by impressions of what has been seen and heard in the Mode, Waking, is the Mode, Dreaming.

When attributing itself to the Emotional Vesture, the Self is called the Radiant.

What then is the Mode, Dreamlessness?

— The sense that I perceive outwardly nothing at all, that rest is joyfully enjoyed by me, this is the Mode, Dreamlessness.

When attributing itself to the Causal Vesture, the Self is called the Intuitional.

THE FIVE VEILS

What are the Five Veils?

— The Food-formed; the Life-formed; the Emotion-formed; the Knowledge-formed; the Bliss-formed.

What is the Food-formed?

— Coming into being through the essence of food, getting its growth through the essence of food, in the food-formed world it is again dispersed, this is the Food-formed Veil — the Physical Vesture.

What is the Life-formed?

— The Forward-life and the four other Lives, Voice and the four other powers of doing; these are the Life-formed.

What is the Emotion-formed Veil?

— Emotion, joining itself to the five powers of knowing — this is the Emotion-formed Veil.

What is the Knowledge-formed?

— The Soul, joining itself to the five powers of knowing — this is the Knowledge-formed Veil.

What is the Bliss-formed?

— This verily is the Substance not quite pure because of the un-wisdom that gives birth to the Causal Vesture; in it are founded all joys; this is the Bliss-formed Veil.

Thus the Five Veils.

By saying: "Mine are the lives; mine is emotion; mine is the soul;

mine is the wisdom"; these are recognized as possessions. And just as a bracelet, a necklace, a house and such things separated from one's self, are recognized as possessions, so the Five Veils and the Vestures, recognized as possessions, are not the Self (the Possessor).

What, then, is the Self?

— It is that whose own-nature is Being, Consciousness, Bliss.

What is Being?

— What stands through the Three Times (Present, Past, Future)
— this is Being.

What is Consciousness?

— The own-nature of Perceiving.

What is Bliss?

— The own-nature of Joy.

Thus let a man know that the own-nature of his own Self is Being, Consciousness, Bliss.

EXPLANATORY

This "Awakening to Reality" is a summary of an intuition of the world, a solution of the universe. Only those who have certain mental and moral endowments are ripe for the understanding of such a solution of the world. Briefly, these endowments are: wisdom and will. The solution reached is — the real Self of every man is the Eternal. This Self is inwardly beginningless, endless, immortal. But outwardly it becomes manifest as three lesser selves, each with its own vesture, its own world.

Lowest of these is the physical self, the "Pervading," with its physical Vesture, in the Waking world.

Next, the emotional self, the "Radiant," with its emotional Vesture, in the Dreaming world.

Highest, the causal self, the "Intuitional," with its causal Vesture, in the Dreamless world. It has existence apart from the Eternal, owing only to the thin veil of illusion, which hides the identity of the One with the All. Thus, as to its own nature, it is unknowing; for, while believing itself One, it is really All. But for all other things it is unerring, for its close proximity to, and real oneness with, the Eternal, give it the inner sense of the trueness of things that is all wisdom. This is "the Seer who ordained all fitly through the ages."

In the Physical Vesture adheres one Veil; in the Emotional Vesture three — the vital, the emotional, the moral; in the Causal, again one.

There is a great difficulty in finding a fit word for the term we have translated "radiation." What is meant is the power — personified, almost personal — conceived to be the "regent" or "deity" of the field in which each mode of perception and action finds its expansion. A closely analogous phrase would be, for instance, "the Prince of the Powers of the Air," who would thus be the "regent" or "deity" of the powers of touch, and, in morals, the "lusts of the flesh."

This is, of course, mythology: a mythical representation of an actual truth, very difficult to represent otherwise than mythologically.

But in the conclusion of the matter there is no difficulty. It is, that a man shall know the own-nature of his own Self to be Being, Consciousness, Bliss; or, in other words, Eternal, Wisdom, Love.

(To be concluded)

THE SEPARATION which exists between individuals, between worlds, between the different poles of the universe and life, the mental and physical phantasy called space, is a nightmare of the human imagination. To break through these illusions and realize the unity of all things is the task of the mystic. One who is thrall'd by the concerns of this life, hungers for the love of fellow beings and dreads their hatred, still cares for wealth and honour, still lusts for physical life and separate existence, had better not intrude upon that other field of illusion, the astral world. Astral perception is not a thing in itself to be desired; it should come in the normal course of development. Nothing is gained by turning from one set of illusions to pursue another; and so of all pursuits phenomena-seeking is most to be deprecated. The knowledge comes only to those who strive to realize unity. He who, beginning upon the lowest plane of life by self-renunciation and devotion to the interests of others, realizes this truth upon each successive plane, attains Nirvana. He who seeks knowledge with any other motive than the unselfish desire to benefit all living creatures is drifting upon the sea of rebirths unpiloted and starless.

—*The Path*, November 1887

THE NERVES OF NATURE

WESTERN MINDS have been so long held in bondage by the world of scientific educators and sceptical materialists who dare not venture beyond the limits of the physical senses and their reactions, that when unique and fantastic phenomena occur they are all too often catalogued as pure imagination, or as puzzling mysteries due to some peculiar emotional shock of the individual or an abnormal mental derangement, or dismissed in favour of hypothetical physical causes still unknown.

To the student of Occultism, the psychic forces and powers of man and Nature, along with the physical and metaphysical worlds, are correlated, and he finds lurking back of each "superstition" and otherwise inexplicable happening an occult truth and a rational explanation.

It is quite possible that the realm of cosmic space is not a tenantless something, but a dwelling place of "beings" different from all familiar forms of life, beings such as "gremlins," fairies or goblins, elemental beings that the scientist knows nothing about.

Centuries ago, Paracelsus, the father of medicine, wrote about earth-spirits — the Gnomes. People began picturing them as wee old men, reddish-brown in colour, with long white hair and whiskers. Children and adults often see these queer little "beings," if we can believe the vast amount of evidence to be found in our reference libraries, newspapers and magazines — a strange phenomenon which seems too vague to put a finger on, and too persistent to disbelieve.

To classify them in a broad, general way, there are, besides the Gnomes, the Undines or Water Spirits, the Salamanders or Fire Elementals, and the Sylphs of the Air. These names are nothing but a description of natural forces.

The elemental kingdoms operating on and through nature are not idle fairy-tales to thrill small children or amuse smug grown-ups. They are centres of energy, fortunately invisible to most people. These "beings" are conscious, semi-conscious, or entirely senseless and are called by different names in every land under the sun.

Elementals will take on any form which the imagination of man creates for them, consciously or unconsciously; forms constructive or destructive, beautiful or demoniacal. Every thought coalesces with an elemental and currents in space become danger zones of maleficent or sanctuaries of beneficent forces.

In examining any teaching we are prone to accept only those ideas

that are in accord with our personal experience and preconceived notions. The idea of the elemental kingdoms may be fantastic to the scientist, but intrinsically it is no more strange than the hypothetical genes and chromosomes he talks so learnedly and convincingly about but has never seen and which to the mass mind are as unthinkable and as much of an illusion as is the elemental kingdom.

Atomic matter is ever, though invisible, present in the great arena of space and will manifest in various shapes when it passes from its own plane to ours and makes itself objective. Pulled down to our level and plane of consciousness, the elementals take their character from creative beings, and we see the marvel of the radio and that miraculous weapon called radar which feels its way through the black shadows of the night, locating the unseen enemy, or warns against the hostile forces lurking in the fog clouds or the darkness.

No physical phenomenon has ever been completely known or ever will be, in physical terms. The occult and hidden side of nature must be investigated, studied and verified. Ancient scientists called the elemental kingdoms the nerves of nature, but to the scientists of today that is pure superstition, or an invented and naive hocus-pocus.

It will be difficult for the sceptical modern scientist to concede the possibility of a prior and greater knowledge than he now possesses, but in the end he will have to admit the ancient conception of Plato, that Space is an ocean of life and that "things that have life are living things, whether they be atoms or planets" — gremlins or elementals.

The subject of elementals is an important one for the student of Theosophy and numerous reprints on the subject have appeared in previous volumes of this Magazine.

At the moment when each of us receives life and being, he is taken in charge by the genii (Elementals) who preside over births. . . . The meaning of this is that as man is composed of all the Great Elements: Fire, Air, Water, Earth and Ether — the ELEMENTALS which belong respectively to these Elements feel attracted to man by reason of their co-essence. That element which predominates in a certain constitution will be the ruling element throughout life. For instance, if man has a preponderance of the Earthly, gnomonic element, the gnomes will lead him towards assimilating metals — money and wealth, and so on.

TALES FROM THE MAHABHARATA

ON ONE OCCASION Yudhishtira asked Bhishma with what kind of men friendships may be formed and with whom friendships may not be formed. Bhishma in response described various types of men, and among the persons who should be avoided, he said, the vilest are those who are ungrateful and who injure their friends. Yudhishtira then desired to hear in detail who they are that are called injurers of friends and ungrateful persons, and Bhishma recited to him the following story which, he said, was a very old one.

Once there was a poor Brahmana, Gautama by name, who lived in a region of the north where many non-Brahmanas lived. He himself did not know the kind of life that a Brahmana should live and was unacquainted with the scriptures.

Walking from village to village, asking for alms, one day he came to a place that looked very prosperous and he went to a large house to beg. This village was actually the habitat of robbers and hunters and the one to whose house he went was a very rich robber. But he was in all other ways a good man, of a charitable disposition, and had respect for Brahmanas. He gave Gautama a large house to live in, provided him with the necessities of life, and gave him a young widowed low-caste woman to look after him.

For a number of years Gautama lived in this way and, having learnt how to use a bow and arrow, went every day into the woods with the other hunters and killed very many cranes. Now one cannot kill large numbers of living creatures every day without losing one's sense of compassion, and Gautama became more and more like the robbers and hunters and less and less like the Brahmana he was by birth.

One day another Brahmana, who had been a friend of Gautama many years before when they were both young, came to the village for alms. He was devoted to the study of the sacred scriptures, was humble in disposition and frugal in fare, and had observed the *Brahmacharya* vows. When he entered the village he looked for a house in which a Brahmana lived, for he would not accept alms from anyone other than a Brahmana, and so he was directed to Gautama's house.

It so happened that just at that time Gautama came back from

the woods, carrying on his shoulder a load of dead cranes which he had shot, and the blood from their wounds had smeared his body. When the Brahmana saw this he was horrified and asked his friend how he could do such a thing. How could he, a Brahmana, live this kind of a life? Reminding him of the duties of a Brahmana, he begged him to abandon this mode of living and to leave the village. Gautama felt ashamed of himself and told him that he was not a learned man and had taken up this life because he wanted wealth; but now that he had seen his old friend and had had it pointed out to him how evil his life was, he would give it up and would go away from the village the next day. Meanwhile he asked his friend to spend the night in his house. The Brahmana, feeling sorry for Gautama, accepted his offer, but he would not touch any food there though pressed to do so and in spite of the fact that he was hungry.

In the morning the Brahmana went on his way. Gautama left also, proceeding towards the coast, and soon he met and joined a caravan of merchants who were going the same way. One night, when they were passing through a mountain valley, an angry elephant attacked the caravan, killing almost all the persons. Gautama somehow escaped and began to wander on until he came to a road that led towards the ocean. Going down this road he soon reached a delightful forest abounding with flowering trees. It was fragrant with perfumes of diverse kinds, and beautiful birds of various species poured forth their melodies.

Going deeper into the forest he came to a level patch of golden sandy ground where a large banyan tree stood, looking like a huge umbrella. Scented flowers were blooming all around and the place looked heavenly. Delighted with the spot, Gautama sat down under the tree to rest.

When the evening twilight came, a bird returned to the tree under which he lay, for it was its home. The bird was a prince of cranes, possessed of great wisdom, very beautiful to look at and adorned with many brilliant ornaments. He had two names: one was Nadijangha, his heavenly name, and the other by which he was called on earth was Rajdharman. Gautama saw him come and was astonished to see such beauty. But he was also hungry and he desired to slay it so that he could eat its flesh.

Before he could do anything, however, Rajdharman welcomed him, saying that he could be his guest for the night. Gautama was very surprised to hear the bird speak, so Rajdharman explained that actually

he was the son of Kasyapa, the great sage, by a celestial nymph. He offered hospitality to his guest by lighting a blazing fire, giving him food, preparing for him a bed of sala flowers and fanning him with his wings to drive off his tiredness. He then asked Gautama who he was and the cause of his arrival there.

Gautama told him that he was a poor Brahmana and that for earning wealth he was desirous of going to the sea. Rajdharman told him not to worry about that. There were, he said, many ways of obtaining wealth: by inheritance; by sudden accessions due to luck or the favour of the gods; by labour; and through the aid or kindness of friends. And as now he had become his friend, he would see that he obtained riches.

Morning came and when Gautama awoke refreshed, Rajdharman told him to go straight along the road and he was bound to succeed in his quest; for the way led to the city known by the name of Meruvraja where lived his friend Virupaksha, a mighty king of the *Rakshasas*, who, induced by Rajdharman's request, would give the Brahmana as much wealth as he desired.

So Gautama went on his way happily, and in time he reached Meruvraja. As he went he let it be known that he was a friend of Rajdharman and had come to see the king. Hearing this, messengers went quickly to Virupaksha, and the king sent for Gautama at once. As Gautama went through the streets he saw what a splendid city it was, and when he reached the palace he was taken to the king who asked to know who he was, what was his learning and his mode of life. Gautama only told him his name and race, but the king knew at once that he was not a student of the sacred scriptures nor a true Brahmana by nature, though one by birth. As, however, he had been sent to him by his dear friend Rajdharman, his duty lay in helping this man. On that very day the king was to entertain a thousand learned Brahmanas, and he told Gautama he too could attend the feast.

When the Brahmanas arrived, Virupaksha received them, and after proper honours they were served with splendid food on golden plates. When the feast was over they were told to take as much as they wanted from a large heap of ornaments of gold and silver and precious stones, and they were also told that they could take away the gold plates on which their food had been served.

Gautama, pleased and happy, took as much wealth as he could carry and went towards the same banian tree under which he had met the

beautiful crane. Seeing that he was exhausted, Rajdharman fanned him with his wings and prepared fresh food for him.

As he rested, Gautama began to think of his journey back home. It would be a long one and the newly acquired wealth was heavy to carry. What would he do for food, he wondered. Then the evil thought came to him that the crane was a large bird and its flesh would feed him for many days. He looked for a while at the beautiful bird who was sleeping peacefully on the other side of the fire he had lit to warm his guest, and, wicked and ungrateful as he was, he got up and killed his sleeping host. Plucking off the feathers and the down, he roasted the flesh on the same fire that the bird had built for his comfort. Then he took up the meat and his bundle of gold and jewels and left the spot.

Now Rajdharman used to visit Virupaksha every day when he returned from his daily visit to the heavenly regions, so when he did not come the next day Virupaksha was worried. He was the more worried because he knew that Gautama was cruel, evil and without compassion, like the robbers with whom he was used to living. The king thought that it might enter into his head to kill the bird, and so he sent his son to find out what had happened.

When the son arrived at the foot of the banian he saw lying on the ground the remains of the beautiful bird, and in great anger he rushed after Gautama. He soon caught up with him and found that he was carrying the flesh of Rajdharman. He took the evil man and the remains of the crane to his father, who was overcome with grief when he saw what had become of his friend. The entire city, in fact, was plunged in grief.

As for Gautama, the king ordered that he should be killed and his body given to the *Rakshasas* to eat. But they refused to eat the flesh of one so vile. The body was then given to the robbers who were cannibals, but even they refused to eat the flesh of such an evil man. For every other sin there is expiation, but for an ungrateful person there is no forgiveness; nothing is so bad as ingratitude.

Virupaksha ordered a funeral pyre to be made and what was left of the crane, covered with rich clothes and jewels, was placed on it and the pyre was lighted. But it so happened that at that very moment Surabhi, the sacred cow, appeared and poured down from her mouth froth mixed with milk upon the body of the crane, bringing it back to life.

Then Indra himself, the chief of the gods, came down, and the

resuscitated Rajdharman, bowing to him in reverence, begged him to also restore his friend Gautama to life. His wish was granted, and Rajdharman embraced the Brahmana with joy. Having sent him, together with his wealth, upon his way, the crane returned to his own abode.

Gautama returned to his home in the village of the hunters, but a heavy curse was denounced upon him by the gods to the effect that that ungrateful sinner would sink into a terrible hell for many years.

Bhishma then said to Yudhishtira that an ungrateful person can never have happiness nor should he ever be trusted. One who is ungrateful can never escape the terrible suffering he thereby invites upon himself. No one ought ever to injure a friend, for the bond of friendship is a sacred one. Everyone should be grateful and should seek to benefit the friends from whom he may have obtained favours. The wise should ever shun the ungrateful and sinful.

THE PERSON of the *brahmana* type of ethical quality and intellectual attainments, of self-denial and wisdom, ascetic ways and scientific pursuits, plain living and high thinking, who follows none other means of livelihood than that prescribed for and appropriate to the *brahmana* vocation, whose body has been made godly, made a holy temple of God, by sacraments and observance of vows—such person alone shall have the right and the duty of educating the people and their children. Only in exceptional circumstances, in times of misfortune, may instruction be received from one who is not earning his living in the way prescribed for the *brahmana*, the man of the learned profession. Normally, only the *brahmana*, the scientist-priest, shall instruct all in the sciences and the arts needed for their respective vocations in life and corresponding means of livelihood; and himself shall gain his living in the ways exclusively assigned to him, *viz.*, honoraria, free gifts and presents without consideration, and unstipulated fees, *dakshina*, in return for spiritual or temporal and scientific “expert” advice and guidance; and in no other ways, though he know and be able to follow them all. The *brahmana* is known as *maitra*, “the friend of all.” Only HE who is the beneficent friend of all is a true *brahmana*.

—FROM THE LAWS OF MANU

“THE FOLK WHO ARE BUYING AND SELLING”

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for September 1941.—EDS.]

AVARICE is the sin of the business world. When people speak of doing good business they mean large and lucrative business. The pleasure of the business man consists in his profits. The more money he makes out of his business the more successful a business man he is considered to be. No great attention is paid to how he makes his money. “Truth is impossible in business”; “honesty is not the best policy” — it is said. Again, avarice and exploitation go together: the more a person is covetous the greater his efforts to make money by hook or by crook. He cares not whom he exploits and to what extent. The way out of this difficulty, which may well be called the psyche of capitalism, is to find its *Nous*. The ideal of serving the community should be substituted in place of making money. The Hindu god of wealth, Kuvera, is said to possess three legs, so that he can rush about the marts and the ports of the world increasing his store of sparkling gems and shining metals; but one additional leg has cost him twenty-four teeth, for he is reported to have only eight! Teeth symbolize the power of digesting and assimilating experience; Kuvera is so busy amassing wealth that he has neither time nor inclination to do anything else. But there is another peculiar feature about this god, who is also known as *Ratna-garbha* — “the womb of jewels.” Among his close friends is Shiva, the Patron Saint of Yogis, the Regenerator. Wealth debases most men, but it has the power to raise them, provided in pursuing Kuvera they find him in the company of Shiva and reflect upon the meaning of that friendship.

In modern civilization the psyche of wealth has played terrifying havoc: earth is robbed of metals and oil which are used to spread death among human beings; food is destroyed while men and women and children go hungry; general poverty stalks the land while “money is cheap” and the coffers of the banks are full. Socialism of the ordinary political variety will not transform society though there be transfer of power to produce wealth and to use it for exploitation. The soul of human service should replace the greed which energizes men. Trade brings comforts and conveniences to hearths and homes — or ought to. The petty shopkeeper as well as the merchant-prince should trade not only as a means of livelihood and to amass wealth, but also to serve the community. No doubt, a labourer is worthy of his hire, but not

much more than his hire; and this equally applies to the *vaishya* as to the *shudra*, to the commercial magnate as well as to the drudge.

The service of the community should be the objective of every profession, every craft, every art. "This is a big order," we hear the worshipper of Mammon exclaiming. Milton makes Mammon a fallen angel, but he could be made to rise. Filthy lucre can be transformed into a shining jewel of service. As long as the human race lives on earth, its bodies will have to be fed and clothed, its minds will have to be trained and educated, its hearts will have to be enlightened, its homes will have to be furnished and beautified. Only a few can live as ascetics; the majority should learn to live in calm content enjoying the bounties of Nature, physical and super-physical; for if they do not, they are apt to run into the sensuous life of gross hedonism.

Here is a line of thought which the student of Theosophy will do well to reflect upon. In earning his livelihood as clerk or shopkeeper, as a professional or a merchant, he can and should make the service of the community his aim.

MAN, made of thought, occupant only of many bodies from time to time, is eternally thinking. His chains are through thought, his release due to nothing else. His mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to. By this means the soul is enmeshed in the same thoughts or series of thoughts as is the mind. If the object be anything that is distinct from the Supreme Self then the mind is at once turned into that, becomes that, is tinted like that. This is one of the natural capacities of the mind. It is naturally clear and uncoloured, as we would see if we were able to find one that had not gone through too many experiences. It is movable and quick, having a disposition to bound from one point to another. Several words would describe it. Chameleon-like it changes colour, sponge-like it absorbs that to which it is applied, sieve-like it at once loses its former colour and shape the moment a different object is taken up. Thus, full of joy from an appropriate cause, it may suddenly become gloomy or morose upon the approach of that which is sorrowful or gloomy.

—Notes on the *Bhagavad-Gita*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

One of the most challenging problems of our time is that of the student revolt. It is not peculiar to any one nation or group of nations, but is a worldwide phenomenon. According to figures published by Unesco, while previously students were a small minority of the total population, today their number is rising spectacularly throughout the world. Between 1960 and 1965 it increased by more than 60 per cent. This, as stated in Tanneguy de Quénétain's article, "The Revolt of the Student Prince" (*Réalités*, March 1970), is a new phenomenon. Today students have become a force to be reckoned with. No more than 10 per cent of them are organized rebels, but as seen in many countries, this minority can sway thousands of moderates to the point of making them fight.

But fight for what? As the article points out, there is no one answer to this question. Self-questioning, doubting, youth has always been, but today the blame for the student revolt falls everywhere: on the world in general, on parents, on any sort of authority, and especially on the university itself. Today there is a demand for more "student power," "participation," "self-management" and "freedom from social rules." For many of their ills they are accusing the affluent society, which has, paradoxically, produced the conditions for a rebellion. Drug addiction, freaking out, hippie dress and professed if not always practised sexual freedom are all part of a *pot-pourri* of student rejection of the old established values. Protests are launched not only for college reform, but against issues with which the students have no direct concern. But some of those causes may be a cover-up for the real malaise: a feeling of being superfluous, unwanted and ignored.

Violence for its own sake is a characteristic of student activism today. It has been found that even if a university administration agrees to all the students' demands, violence still persists. The reply of a student in Rome when asked what his demands were, is typical of the student attitude: "No demands, no delegations, no negotiations, no dialogue! The battle has no objective, it *is* the objective!"

The article goes on to formulate the problem thus:

In its early stages industrial society created a new social class by making workers out of peasants and craftsmen; in a later stage it created a new age class by taking a section of the adult population and turning them into "students" and "youth." Today,

while class divisions are being slowly but surely eliminated through improved living standards and better education, this very process is driving a new wedge between "youth" and "adults"...

...the old are no longer the wise — they are just an economically underprivileged group; the "adults" must keep their noses to the grindstone if they are to support the rest of the community; and the young are forced into the role of children as a result of the prolonged postponement of the responsibilities of adulthood. This segregation of youth has gone hand in hand with the creation of a cult of youth... Youth has been put on a pedestal: we pander to their whims, wonder what they think, question each new wave of thought. People like to think of themselves as "young executives," "young workers," "young this," "young that." The youth cult has provided a rich market of business and advertising and our consumer society has exploited it to the full, with such success that youth has become a race apart, with its own music, myths, heroes, idols, clothes. A self-contained subculture has been created...

In waging war on society the aim of the students as the intellectual avant-garde of youth has been to acquire adult status for themselves... Their attitude is not, however, unambiguous, since they wish to be regarded as adults and at the same time, as "students," they feel themselves essentially different from other adults. Some of them are terrified at the thought that they too will one day be adult...

But why this fear of ageing? Contemporary society is witness to the weakening, possibly even the collapse of the father figure. Traditionally, the father was the link between the closed world of the family in which the child grew up and the world outside. But Marcuse has shown in his *One-Dimensional Man* how the mass media, and in particular television, have supplanted the father in this initiating role. Things are no longer true because "my father said so" but because "I saw it on TV..."

Though well-informed, the young lack self-control, real independence and fully integrated personalities. And the decline of the father is largely responsible for this. As a substitute the young turn to their teachers, but pressure of work often makes the teachers seem too distant, dehumanized and ultimately impotent...

Finally, overwhelming both father and teacher looms what may be defined as the "power of the state" in its many and boundless forms. In his highly perceptive socio-psychoanalytical book,

La Révolte contre le Père (Revolt against the Father), Gérard Mendel says that technology has dramatically strengthened the power of society, restoring it to something approaching the omnipotence attributed by primitive man to Nature. On the psychological level this development is decidedly repressive in character. . . .

An effective solution of the student problem would involve a complete reorganization of both the university and modern society. One suggestion that is made is to introduce a system of lifelong education. "Such a system might provide that, from the age of 15 onwards, work and study would alternate. A period of so many years at university would be replaced by a system of credits which could be earned at any time during the students' lives. Thus we would be curiously close to the medieval system whereby 'scholars' of all ages rubbed shoulders — '*pueros, adolescentes, juvenes, senes.*' "

The article does not refer to the failure to instil moral standards in youth. Religions have not taught men any other or higher reason why they should be just and kind and peace-abiding than the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, and when they let go their belief in divine caprice and divine injustice, as the youth of today have done, the foundations of their morality are sapped. They have not even natural morality to consciously fall back upon; some religions have taught them to regard it as worthless on account of the natural depravity of man. Therefore, self-interest becomes the only motive for conduct. And so, religions have pushed men off the path that leads to knowledge, and precipitated them into the abyss of incredulity, pessimism and vice. The fact that the student problem has arisen at a time when traditional religions are being discarded is significant. The need for a substitute for what is discarded is an urgent one.

Western man's quest for a substitute for traditional religions is making him embark on strange, often dubious, adventures. *Life* (Asia Edition, February 2) describes the emergence of new "religions," to which many in America especially are attracted:

The people involved in this resurgence are pragmatic: they have re-evaluated what is really sacred to them and moved to do something about it. Some, through the use of psychedelic drugs and marijuana — phenomena of the '60s — or of such techniques as yoga, chanting and meditation, have concluded that a transe-

dent experience is well within their reach. Others have embarked upon a spiritual search which has become a way of life; in a sense their goal is the search itself. Both those reluctant to disrupt the established structure of their lives and those whose lives have not yet found a pattern are involved. And in each case, the emphasis is on practice, not theory.

Never before in history has a single society taken up such a wide range of religious and near-religious systems at once. A variety of Eastern religions have attracted individual followers and even whole congregations. Encounter, or "T," groups, exercises in human awareness and sensitivity, are gaining in popularity all over the country and often lead naturally into a spiritual quest. There is great interest in witchcraft and Tarot reading. Occult bookstores are booming. And while relatively little of the activity is centred within traditional Western churches, divinity schools report a large increase in applications. . . .

The searchers share strong motivation. Most are keenly aware, as Harvard Theologian Harvey Cox puts it in his new book, *The Feast of Fools*, that "while gaining the whole world, Western man has been losing his own soul," and they seem to sense the need to restore the one in order to recover the other. Thus their rueful concern about the destruction of our natural environment, a fruitful theme, politically and spiritually, for the coming decade. The variety of their approaches is even more striking.

This "spiritual resurgence," so called, is part of the current wave of interest in the pseudo-occult that is passing over the Western world. Many of the practices which go under the name are as far removed from the truly occult and spiritual as night is from day. Modern man is searching for something that transcends the mundane experience, yet he knows not where to find it.

Under the title "Jigsaw of the Primeval World," the same issue of *Life* outlines the recently uncovered evidence that corroborates the old theory that all the earth's continents fitted together some 200 million years ago. In 1915, the German meteorologist and Arctic explorer Alfred Wegener proposed that there had once been only two huge land masses and that the continents reached their present geographical positions by splitting up and drifting across the ocean floors. His work was based on "fossil similarities among the continents and on the striking jigsaw-puzzle shapes of the land masses." *Life* continues:

In 1959 marine geologists completed a study of the newly charted ridge of mountains that winds unbroken 47,000 miles across the ocean floors. Oddly, the path of the ridge seemed to mimic the coastlines of continents it passed between. Water temperatures near the ridge were higher than those of surrounding waters, suggesting volcanic activity. Sonar measurements made during mapping indicated that the sediments in the area were far too thin for an ocean that should have been laying down sediment for billions of years. It seemed possible that the ocean floor had been moving away from the ridge, carrying continents farther apart as though they were riding a huge conveyor belt. But the tantalizing idea remained to be confirmed until recently when a specialized U.S. research ship, the *Glomar Challenge*, came along. The *Glomar Challenger's* job — called the Deep Sea Drilling Project — was to collect core samples from the ocean's sedimentary floor right down to the volcanic bedrock that lies beneath. Geologists are able to date these cores by the varying thickness of the layers they contain and their fossil content, much as a naturalist can date a tree by its rings. . . . The *Challenger* set out from the Gulf of Mexico in 1968 and drilled at 78 different sites in 16 months — some through water almost four miles deep.

It turned out that the oldest cores — up to 140 million years — consistently came from drillings far away from the mid-ocean ridge, while the youngest — a million years — were always found right on its edge. From this and from recent underwater measurements of the variations in the earth's magnetic field — which has reversed itself 171 times in the last 76 million years, leaving a chronological record frozen in the volcanic rock produced at the time — geologists now believe the ridge is a scar that shows where the continents were once joined. The ridge sits on top of a long rift in the earth's crust through which molten rock is slowly welling up from the interior.

As the rock cools, more lava behind it comes up to push it farther out from the rift. Sediment settling on this rock is borne along, becoming thicker, until somewhere, at the edge of the continents, both sediment and rock sink down again into the interior, completing the conveyor belt cycle — a process that may explain the youth of the ocean floor compared to the great age of many geological features on dry land. And the continents themselves are being pushed along at a measurable rate. North America, for example, is moving away from Europe an inch a year.

What has caused the drifting apart of the continents? Have all the

great geological changes been produced solely by ordinary and known physical forces? Were not rather these forces "but the tools and final means for the accomplishment of certain purposes, acting periodically, and apparently mechanically, through an inward impulse mixed up with, but beyond their material nature"? "There is a purpose in every important act of Nature," continues *The Secret Doctrine*, "whose acts are all cyclic and periodical. But spiritual Forces having been usually confused with the purely physical, the former are denied by, and therefore, have to remain unknown to Science, because left unexamined." (I. 640)

In the opinion of specialists from 18 countries — media men, sociologists, psychologists, and representatives of other professional and welfare groups who met at Unesco headquarters (June 29–July 7) for a symposium on "The Impact of Violence in the Mass Media" — television, radio and newspapers should not be considered the cause of violence in modern society, although they share a measure of responsibility for the violent climate in which we live. Furthermore, they felt, blaming everything on the media may divert attention from deeper causes. (*Unesco Features*, August 1970)

Identifying three ways in which the media could contribute to violence, Professor Elihu Katz of the Communications Institute in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem said that they could "create frustration by tantalizing the public with things beyond its reach — whether electric dishwashers or better educational opportunities; teach the techniques of violence — whether the methods of fictional criminals or real political groups; establish patterns, so that people accepted violence as legitimate and even normal."

Participants were also divided on the origins of violence. While the majority stressed its biological and psychological roots, Alexander Druzhinin of Moscow Television emphasized its direct connection with social tensions. Where the structure of society permits contradictions between the aims of different classes, he said, there will be tension leading to violence.

Despite pleas by some that the special susceptibilities of children must be respected, participants generally doubted if censorship was the answer to the problem of violence.

For some, autocontrol worked. For example, Henry Geddes, executive director of the Children's Film Foundation, had found what children wanted by asking them: voting by children at 400 cinemas in a kind of children's Oscar had established the pattern of incident-full but violence-free fare they liked. . . .

The \$1,000,000 research programme ordered by the United States Congress . . . covering 20 separate studies over two years, ranges wide over the problem. Interviews of 900 children at set intervals will attempt to measure their aggressiveness. There will even be television cameras mounted on the TV sets of 20 families, in a sociologist's version of "Big Brother is Watching You," in order to note their reactions to various types of programmes.

Those most likely to watch televised violence are socially disadvantaged children, and those with the least satisfactory family relationships. Children who are already aggressive also tend to watch more. If family attitudes to violence are unknown or unclear, normal children are more likely to approve of it and to see it as a way of solving problems.

Adults tend to follow the same patterns as children.

There are no findings, incidentally, to prove the "catharsis theory" that portrayed violence, so to speak, "drains off" violent impulses which are already present in the audience.
