

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 50, No. 11

17th September 1980

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1946.—Eds.]

We maintain that memory, as Olympiodorus called it, is simply *phantasy*, and the most unreliable thing in us.—H.P.B.

The phantasy is an impediment to our intellectual conceptions; and hence, when we are agitated by the inspiring influence of the Divinity, if the phantasy intervenes, the enthusiastic energy ceases: for enthusiasm and the ecstasy are contrary to each other. Should it be asked whether the soul is able to energize without phantasy, we reply, that its perception of universals proves that it is able. It has perceptions, therefore, independent of the phantasy; at the same time, however, the phantasy attends in its energies, just as a storm pursues him who sails on the sea.

—OLYMPIODORUS

I am in the hearts of all men, and from me come memory, knowledge, and also the loss of both.—*Bhagavad-Gita*, xv. 15

MEMORY is one of the major factors which sustain our illusions in the personal life and make difficult the overcoming of weaknesses and afflictions by the man of flesh.

This memory is akin to and dependent on fancy, which expresses itself in a variety of ways. "Full of shapes is fancy," says Shakespeare — from follies and day-dreaming (which is debilitating to healthy, *i.e.*, integrated, living) to the erecting of the prison-house of psychic images out of which its egotistic builder is not able to find release. This latter is known in Eastern Occultism as *Vikalpa-jāla* — a snare-like dilemma from which there is no escape.

We need not detain ourselves with the delectable variety of fancy indulged in by the awakening youthful Kama-Manas. The age of psychic

puberty has its grave dangers and the fancy-infested desire-nature is one of them. For the ordinary mind there is wastage of the mental seminal power; but for the neophyte fancy is a dangerous vitiating force. He cannot afford to be weakened in the power of concentration which the habit of fancy brings about.

What type of memory, then, is a hindrance to the neophyte, against which he is warned? Not the memory which enables the personal man to remember the higher truths which the Sages have taught, but that memory which arises like a miasma from hurt feelings, damaged pride and injured *amour-propre* of the lower man. Often in cool, dry, delightful weather the bright sun draws out the reeking miasma from the earth. So with the earnest devotee. The man of earth emits a miasma under the benign influence of his spiritual sun. And such is the power of *maya* and of *moha*, illusion and delusion, that with his attention fixed on the miasma he forgets the very existence of the sun.

In the Book of Discipline named *The Voice of the Silence*, the neophyte is told:

Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.

This is in reference to the lower personal memory. Nature, through the process of bodily death and of devachanic subjectivity, makes us loose the evil hold of personal memories of the past. The neophyte is called upon to do this consciously and deliberately, with a view to learning to awaken the Higher Memory; for Mr. Judge has stated that "getting back the memory of other lives is really the whole of the process."

Robert Crosbie has explained that "this, however, cannot mean the sordid details of physical existence." Then what?

A something larger, finer, greater — the memory of the divine Ego, and those functions of our real life which go on during sleep.

It is not to this Higher Memory that the words of *The Voice of the Silence* should be applied: "One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind, will drag thee down." This Higher Memory is Reminiscence, which is not a "faculty or attribute of our *physical* memory, but an intuitional perception apart from and outside our physical brain," writes H.P.B., and she calls it "the memory of the Soul."

The lower memory may be compared to the waste matter thrown out by the body in the processes of digestion and assimilation; the higher

memory, to the flesh and marrow manufactured by the body's constructive metabolism. The former is Kama-rupic; the latter is the assimilated experience garnered and gathered by the Devachanee.

This Higher Memory cannot function in the personal man when he is busy with the lower memory called remembrance, and lives in it, revivifying mundane events and earthly experiences. As long as remembrance functions in the personal man his mind becomes of the shape, and becomes the mirror, of undesirable things. Real progress in soul life is not made and the results of spiritual exercises are nullified, if not totally, then to a very great extent, when mundane memory is allowed to intervene.

Mr. Judge's hint about getting back the memory of the past means activating reminiscence by concentrating the inner mind upon the Self. Says Shankara — "Cut thy bond stained with the stains of the world; by strong effort make thy manhood fruitful." How? By centring all thought and imagination (*Chitta-Vratta*) in the Self.

Our modern life encourages the retention and reproduction of a multiplicity of useless and surely-recurring thoughts — memory of many objects, things, subjects, duties, persons, circumstances and affairs. Internal images claim the attention of the personal consciousness and stop it from ideating upon the world of the Real.

But there is something more: Not only is there a reproduction of past experiences but also a nefarious brooding over them, in which process fancy functions, translating the person to the most undesirable Kama-lokic state in waking consciousness itself. Phantoms are brought to birth; phantasms ensue; a phantasmagoria is the afflicted's sphere of existence; for a time short or long he lives therein and, unless he puts a stop to recurring fancy, he must perish.

Patanjali mentions among the modifications of the mind both Memory and Fancy. While memory will not permit us to let go a remembrance, fancy brings forth notions devoid of any real basis. It conjures up old ghosts which create new spectres. Thick-coming fancies hold the neophyte to the plane of psychic delirium. Shankara advises that certain things should never be recalled, should be dislodged from the chambers of remembrance — "To remember as an object of desire the thing that has been vomited, brings contempt."

The neophyte has to learn to take his mind off himself. The diffusive power which draws the mind to a hundred objects has to be focalized.

An inner centre of life has to be created in the brain-mind and then transformed into a channel for the Spirit whose Light will flow through it and flood all his surroundings. This task of creating, out of the man of gross and dark desires, a man of refinement by utilizing the pressure of Karma, is akin to the pressure by which Nature transmutes coal into diamond. This has to be attempted and attained ere the diamond-soul can shed its light in the nether world.

Fancy and memory of that nether world are the neophyte's enemies. He must apply the instruction and learn to saturate himself with pure Alaya. He must forget about the thousand and one nights of fanciful living and fix his gaze upon the Dawn of the Everlasting Day in which the Spiritual Sun shines.

A rifting light in me
Burns through the leaden broodings of the mind:
O blessèd Sun, thy state
Uprisen or derogate
Daffs me no more with doubt; I seek and find.

And so of all which form inheriteth
The fall doth pass the rise in worth;
For birth hath in itself the germ of death,
But death hath in itself the germ of birth.
It is the falling acorn buds the tree,
The falling rain that bears the greenery,
The fern-plants moulder when the ferns arise.
For there is nothing lives but something dies,
And there is nothing dies but something lives.
Till skies be fugitives,
Till Time, the hidden root of change, updries,
Are Birth and Death inseparable on earth;
For they are twain yet one, and Death is Birth.

—FRANCIS THOMPSON: "Ode to the Setting Sun"

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND H.P.B.

[*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 14*, entitled "H. P. Blavatsky," includes in its Appendix an excerpt from Mrs. Annie Besant's article published in the December 1890 *Lucifer*. We reprint here this article in full, along with her prefatory note.—Eds.]

[The following article expresses the views of many members of the Theosophical Society, who feel strongly that it is time that some protest should be made against the constant petty criticisms levelled at H.P.B. As co-editor, I put in the article, which has not been submitted to H.P.B., nor will she see it until the magazine is issued; so she is in no sense responsible for its appearance.—ANNIE BESANT]

ON the 17th day of last month, the Theosophical Society completed the first fifteen years of its existence, and can look back over a youth tempestuous indeed, but marked by continuous growth. When first, in New York, the two "Founders" of the infant Society enrolled their earliest members, a profound sadness must have lain at the heart of the one who realized all that was meant by that primary step. "The last quarter of the century!" Not for the first time had that cry been sounded in the Western World, but all the previous attempts had but stirred the waters and had—failed. Was this nineteenth century to pass into Hades with its predecessors, bearing only the wreckage of shattered hopes, of broken forces? Was this dawn to darken into night instead of morning, and leave the twentieth century to grope in darkness with none to guide? Or were there, scattered through the West, enough of the students of the past to awake at the summons from the Orient, students in whose hearts the occult fire was smouldering, waiting but the "breath" to make it burst forth in flame? Only when the knell of the century has sounded will the answer to such questionings be fully heard: still is the lot hidden, save from the eyes that pierce beyond the veil. It "lies on the knees of Osiris," and it will fall thence into the lap of failure or of triumph, as *they* keep faith or break it, who form the working brotherhood of the Theosophical Society.

The seed planted in America has grown there to a tree with widely spreading branches.¹ In India, the Society quickly made its way, and

¹An early draft of the constitution of the T.S. lies before me, and shows that, in its inception, membership of the T.S. involved much heavier obligations than are now required from accepted candidates. The fellowship had three sections and each section had three degrees. For the highest, the conditions were severe, and could only be taken by those ready to devote their whole lives to occultism.

thanks to the energy, the eloquence, and the devotion of Colonel H. S. Olcott, the co-founder and President, branches sprang up in every direction, the ancient literature was enthusiastically studied, schools were founded where knowledge untainted by Christianity could be gathered by the young, and India, waking from the sleep of centuries, felt herself to be once more a nation, a nation with a mighty past, and with the possibility of a glorious future. While all this rush of new life thrilled along the veins of Hindustan, the heart of that life throbbed steadily on, the fount of the circulating energy, though the limbs and the organizing brain were more prominent in the eyes of the world. That heart was H.P.B. Indifferent to the exercise of authority, careless of external show — even to the shocking of those tight-fettered by social conventions — willing to efface herself if thereby her mission might the better prosper, there she was, the source of the occult forces which alone could sustain the Theosophical Society. Ready to prove the reality of those as yet little known powers of Nature, the effects of which are as marvellous to the cultured European as are electrical phenomena to the Central African, she performed experiment after experiment for the instruction of those who personally sought her. But she steadily refused to vulgarize her mission by any kind of general “performance of phenomena,” which could only gratify curiosity and serve no useful purpose. When urged to “show her powers” merely to convince the general crowd, who cared nothing for Theosophical teaching but only desired to gratify their idle love of the marvellous, when told that thus she might win credence and establish her authority, she merely shrugged her shoulders, and, with the indifference of the trained occultist, answered that they might believe or not as they chose; let them say she was “a fraud”; what did it matter? For the real student she had an inexhaustible patience, willingness to prove, readiness to explain; for the idle curiosity-hunter, a careless “Oh, it’s nothing! psychological tricks, maya, what you please.”

With many of the Brahmins she came into direct collision. Sent to teach to the world at large many of the doctrines which had been jealously preserved as the treasure of a privileged minority, she struck them on their tenderest point, their pride in the possession of knowledge hidden from the vulgar crowd, their sensitive jealousy lest their holiest should be profaned. Knowing that she was speaking truth, they often contradicted her in public, while in private they hotly protested against the desecration of their sanctuaries. Physically a subject race, conquered

by the material force of the aggressive West, they retired the more into the strongholds of their intellectual pride, looking with unutterable contempt on the foreigner who could subdue their bodies, but who, in his ignorance of the secrets of Nature, was but a barbarian in their haughty eyes. That he should rule in India was well, since India had forsaken her ancestral wisdom and was unworthy to be free; but that he should catch a glimpse of that mental and spiritual realm of which they were citizens — nay, such intrusion should be resisted to the last, and the very existence of such a realm should be kept secret, lest he should find a gate that might let him in. That this Russian teacher had her knowledge from the sages they revered, they were unable to deny; but they resisted her publication of the teachings as their ancestors had resisted the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha. Not for the “common people” were even the crumbs of the “Divine Wisdom.”

Nevertheless, despite all, her influence steadily grew, and the Theosophical Society struck its roots far and wide. Then came the bitter and unscrupulous attack of the Christian missionaries in the famous Coulomb forgeries, forgeries some of them so transparent that they could not have deceived an intelligent child, others ingeniously concocted of the half-truths that “are ever the blackest of lies.”

And here, I venture to say, a mistake was made, a mistake in tactics as well as a failure in loyalty. An examination held promptly and on the spot proved the falsehood of the calumnious accusations, and exposed the nefarious artifices by which evidences had been fabricated. So far, so good. But then, instead of closing up round the assailed Teacher and defending to the utmost her position and her honour, the fatal policy was adopted of attempting to minimize her position in the Society, of arguing that the teaching remained impregnable whether the teacher was or was not trustworthy. It was a policy of expediency, not of principle, it being thought wise to ignore attacks rather than to refute them, and to lay stress on the inherent strength of the philosophy rather than to continually vindicate its exponent. Suffering from acute disease, and always too doubtful of her own judgment in mere exoteric matters, in questions of policy and expediency, to trust to it against the advice of men of the world, H.P.B. allowed herself to be put aside, while the Society was exalted at the expense of its Founder, and left it to go its own way in Hindustan. When sufficiently recovered from almost fatal illness, she recommenced her work, but in Europe, not in India, confining her activity to the Western World.

The effects of her presence quickly became manifest. Where was the occult heart, there was centred the life of the Society, and in the West, on every side, appeared signs of new vitality. How the Theosophical Movement was spread through Western lands it needs not here to relate. The "Theosophical Activities" in every number of *Lucifer* tell the tale so that he who runs may read.

This rapid growth has been due primarily to H.P.B.'s personal presence, secondarily to the formation of the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society. Into this, those only are admitted who accept H.P.B. as their teacher in Occultism, recognizing her as the messenger of that Brotherhood who are the real Founders of the Theosophical Society. This Section embraces most of the most active workers in the Society, and as they base their activity on their philosophy little of it is wasted in running after false scents. There is a certain fringe of people who come and go, who enter from curiosity and are disgusted when they find only hard work; who seek for "powers" and are angry when they find only self-denial; who enter thinking Occultism an easy and exciting study, and break under the tension to which they find themselves subjected. But the centre of the Section is steadily solidifying, and it encircles H.P.B. with evergrowing trust—founded on lengthening experience—with ever-increasing love, gratitude and loyalty.

Now touching the position of H.P.B. to and in the Theosophical Society, the following is a brief exposition of it, as it appears to many of us:

(1) *Either she is a messenger from the Masters, or else she is a fraud.*

From this dilemma there is no escape. If she does not come from Them, bringing their message, doing their work, executing their commission, her whole life is a lie. From beginning to end, she has claimed nothing as her own, everything as from Them. Those who are in daily contact with her, know how she continually refers to their decision, speaks in their name. No third course is open to us; there are only these alternatives, the mission is either real or fraudulent.

(2) *In either case the Theosophical Society would have had no existence without her.*

The folly of trying to separate the Theosophical Society and H.P.B. lies in this fact. Without H.P.B. no Theosophical Society. All the Westerns who know anything of Theosophy have learned from her or from her pupils. Col. Olcott, as he always recognizes, obtained through her

his introduction to the work. Save for her, he would be a well-known American Spiritualist, not the President of the Theosophical Society. So with Mr. Sinnett, so with Mr. Judge, so with each and all. Many have obtained independent evidence afterwards, but for all she has been the portal through which they have passed into the occult world. Nor is the fact that the existence of the Theosophical Society is due to her the only proof of the hopelessness of the attempt to rend the twain apart. For just as it owed to her its inception, so now it owes to her its vitality. Where she is, there, evident to all eyes, is the centre of energy; and where she is not physically, there the progress is in proportion to the loyalty shown towards her. Unfair criticism of her, ungenerous carping at her, slackness in defending her against attack from outside, wherever these are found there also quickly follow stagnation, decay, death.

(3) *If she is a fraud, she is a woman of wonderful ability and learning, giving all the credit of these to some persons who do not exist.*

As to the ability and learning, these are not challenged by her enemies. They sometime say that her knowledge is ill-digested, that she arranges her materials badly, that she is misty, involved, self-contradictory. But that she possesses an extraordinary fund of varied information, bearing on out-of-the way topics, and obscure philosophies, is admitted on every hand. If she be a fraud, why is she such a fool as to invent imaginary Teachers, fathering on them her knowledge, and so gaining from every side abuse and slander, while she might have gained credit, to say nothing of money, by the simple and natural course of giving out her own as her own? Can anything more insane be imagined than for a Russian woman of noble family, married to a high official, to go out into the world on a wild-goose chase after imaginary Teachers, and having acquired a mass of recondite knowledge at great cost and suffering, to throw away all the credit of acquiring it, to ascribe it to non-existent persons, to face slander, abuse, calumny, instead of utilizing it in a more common way, to remain an exile from her own country, to be poor and despised where she might be wealthy and honoured? If anyone can produce, outside Bedlam, a lunatic more mad than H.P.B. must be if she be a fraud, I should be grateful for the honour of an introduction.

(4) *If H.P.B. is a true messenger, opposition to her is opposition to the Masters, she being their only channel to the Western World.*

This proposition scarcely needs argument to sustain it; it is self-

evident; she alone is in direct and constant communication with the trans-Himalayan Adepts. They chose her, and presumably they can manage their own business. Once accept the philosophy, you must accept her; accept her and you cannot stop short of the full proposition as stated above. And here let me make a suggestion to those who rashly and superficially judge H.P.B., and complain that she is hasty, that she "shuts up" enquirers, that she repels would-be disciples. H.P.B. varies with the people who come to her. To the person who veils mere curiosity under polite forms and false courtesy, she will be abrupt, sharp, repellent. The hostile feeling masked under smiles, finds itself pierced by a keen sarcasm, or knocking itself against a wall of ice. But to the honest enquirer she is patient and gentle to a rare extent, and only her pupils know of a patience that has no limits, a strength that never falters, an insight that never errs. In fact, H.P.B. herself is the test of the members and when they begin to grumble at her, they would do wisely to analyse themselves. I sometimes think of a test dropped into a solution, precipitating some substance therein contained. "What a horrid liquid it must be so to dirty that beautifully clear fluid," cry the ignorant. If the substance had not been present, it would not have been precipitated by the test, and if enquirers and members are honest, they will find themselves attracted, not repelled, by H.P.B.

(5) If there are no Masters, the Theosophical Society is an absurdity, and there is no use in keeping it up. But if there are Masters, and H.P.B. is their messenger, and the Theosophical Society their foundation, the Theosophical Society and H.P.B. cannot be separated before the world.

This is the conclusion of the whole matter, the decision on which must guide our policy. I see on some sides a disposition to temporize, to whittle away the Esoteric Teachings, to hastily twist them into accord with temporary hypotheses of Science, in order to gain a momentary advantage, perchance a fuller hearing. This is not wise. Already some such hypotheses, opposed to occult teachings, have been thrown aside by more advanced scientific thought, and have been replaced by other hypotheses, more nearly approaching the occult views. There is no need to hurry, nor to try to pour the archaic doctrines into new bottles, ere those bottles have been tested. The Secret Teachings have stood many thousands of years, and have been the source from which the stream of progress has flowed. They can venture to stand on their

own basis for a few years more, till Science crosses the dividing line it is tentatively approaching with each new discovery.

To the members of the Theosophical Society, I venture to say a word of pleading. But a few years stretch before us ere the century expires, a century whose close coincides well-nigh with the close of a cycle. As the sands of those years are running through the hour-glass of Time, our opportunities are running with them; it is "a race against time," in a very real sense. If the members care at all for the future of the Society, if they wish to know that the Twentieth Century will see it standing high above the strife of parties, a beacon-light in the darkness for the guiding of men, if they believe in the Teacher who founded it for human service, let them now arouse themselves from slothful indifference, sternly silence all dissensions over petty follies in their ranks, and march shoulder to shoulder for the achievement of the heavy task laid upon their strength and courage. If Theosophy is worth anything, it is worth living for and worth dying for. If it is worth nothing, let it go at once and for all. It is not a thing to play with, it is not a thing to trifle with. Ere 1891 sees its earliest dawning, ere 1890 falls into the grave now digging for it, let each Theosophist, and above all let each Occultist, calmly review his position, carefully make his choice, and if that choice be for Theosophy, let him sternly determine that neither open foes nor treacherous friends shall shake his loyalty for all time to come to his great Cause and Leader, which twain are one.

—ANNIE BESANT, F.T.S.

NON-VIOLENCE is "not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness." On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and real fight against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this is an ideal state. And so it is.

—M. K. GANDHI

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

THE MOST ANCIENT religious philosophies teach that the manifested universe is the flower of Sacrifice. The ancient doctrine of Emanations enables us to comprehend the nature and method of this sacrifice, while its modern counterpart of Evolution does *not*. Only in a restricted sense, in connection with the human kingdom, do we ordinarily speak of sacrifice. The Sanskrit term for it, *Yagna*, conveys much more to the Hindu, for example, than does the word Sacrifice to the Christian, in spite of all that has been said about the Sacrifice of the Christos.

Ordinarily sacrifice, as a principle of morality and ethics, is considered to be a desirable virtue and is much more talked about than observed, for the reason that it is little understood. The entire gamut of human evolution is traceable in the expression of Sacrifice. The whole universe is an embodiment of sacrifice. Each kingdom sacrifices for every other kingdom. When we obtain the knowledge hidden in Nature, we are not depressed at her ruthlessness; for she is not ruthless, not remorseless. She is Compassion Incarnate. The laws of *Dharma* and *Yagna* as they work in Nature need to be seen. Nature is dutiful and her whole movement is one Grand Sacrifice. If we apply her ways to ourselves we will learn to sacrifice the senses so that the mind may be born in us; to sacrifice the mind so that the heart may be born in us; to sacrifice the heart so that the soul may be born in us; to sacrifice the soul so that the spirit may be born in us; to sacrifice the spirit so that the Universal Spirit, Paramatma, may be born in us.

Sacrifice begets sacrifice — this is the ancient law.

There is the sacrifice of enjoyment and personal pleasure, and it is with this that man begins. To start with, people sacrifice for those they love — to feel the power of their love through that sacrifice. There is no question of motive of duty, but there *is* the giving up of some personal attachment — *Raga*, in Sanskrit — for a greater and a deeper love. At this stage we sacrifice not because it is right or a duty to sacrifice, but because it brings us a deeper joy, a deeper inner satisfaction. On the plane of emotions and feelings this sacrifice manifests itself.

Next, the sense of Duty comes to birth — *Dharma*. With it is felt some appreciation of Causality and Destiny — *Karma* — and so to *Raga*-Attachment, the other member of the pair, is added *Dvesha*-Dislike. People begin to sacrifice not only for loved ones, but also for persons, objects, aims, which they may not, often do not, love, but which they

feel are good and should be sacrificed for, out of a sense of Duty. It is at this stage that mortification is practised. We feel we must sacrifice although we do not like to do it. It should be noted here that the objects for which sacrifice is made have increased in number. While in the first type, sacrifice is performed out of selfish attachment or affection for one's own circumscribed personal self, in the second a sense of duty, by which that personal self is mortified, shows itself. In the first, to take but one example, sacrifice is confined to friends and kin; in the second, its scope increases; a less personal position is taken, but still sacrifice moves in a restricted circle, and looks forward to receiving its due fruits. Communal charity, national benefactions which bring fame and popularity, are in this second class of *yagna* or sacrifice.

This leads to the third kind. When the expected results of sacrifice do not come forth, much confusion and some enquiry ensue. When a man has given a lakh or two of rupees and still he remains unpraised, he wonders — of course within his own heart — what is the matter? The same phenomenon takes place in other spheres; for example, a social servant sacrifices in the hope of achieving a good result, and when it is not forthcoming, he asks — why did this happen? It is at this stage that man finds out that sacrifice without knowledge is not real sacrifice. Numerous are the steps and stages in this third compartment. Man learns slowly, his ignorance dies hard! He learns that it is better to feed the mind than to feed the body; better to sacrifice for the nation than for the community, which is part of that nation; better to clothe the soul than to clothe the mind; better to help man build his own bodily temple and become his own priest than to build temples and mosques and churches and synagogues. Just as mortification guides the second kind of sacrifice, so knowledge energizes this third type of *yagna*.

This search through knowledge brings man to real or spiritual sacrifice. He sees that sacrifice is not only doing something to someone with what we possess, it is not only giving of wealth or even of knowledge that we possess, but it is an act of life. All acts should be sacrifices, teaches the *Gita*. This means that whatever we do must be done with a Life-Ideation, with a Heart-Energy. To throw a coin to a beggar is outer sacrifice — the motive, the thought, the energy behind the act makes it real or unreal, complete or not complete. Sacrifice life with Life. The great Life sacrifices for the little life; the Great Masters for the little world. To practise that high kind of true sacrifice, all

duties and deeds of life must be used. Here, giving and receiving become one, the sinner and the saint commingle, the sacrificer has become sacrifice itself. It is somewhat difficult to understand, but in this is the true meaning of the Sacrifice of the Christos, the Universal Self, of Vishvakarma, the Divine Carpenter, the *Yazeshnae* which Ahura Mazda performed, the *Yagna* of Maheshwara.

How shall we learn to perform this kind of sacrifice? By learning the art of seeing the divine aspect of all that we do, of all that we contact. Learn to discern the Spirit working in all you do. You are eating? Thus are you nourishing the Gods who nourish you. You are bathing? Thus are you cleansing earth of its sins — the task of the Gods. You are reading? Thus are you enlightening the darkness of ignorance as the Masters do. You are giving help? Such is the gift that Nature and the Lords of Nature bestow, like rain and sunshine and sweet breezes; and feel grateful for the opportunity that is yours. You are receiving help? Be like flowers, happy to receive warmth and light; be contented and busy as the bee, receiving sweetness from the buds and blossoms; be like the sacred cow, receiving fodder and then transmuting it into milk for the nourishment of man. If the recipient of charity transforms not what he gets to help others, he receives in vain. So — live in sacrifice, thinking of the Great Sacrifice, *Adhi-Yagna*, the Soul of the soul, He who incarnates that thousands may learn, He who dies so that thousands may know how to die, in order that they may live.

PROHIBITIONS of all kinds serve only to exasperate the evil nature in men. We need not to *prohibit*. We need to *educate*, and first of all, we need to educate ourselves. Let us take the beam out of our own eyes before we try to remove the mote from the eyes of others. Let us retreat into the shrine of our own being. Let us *be* that Self, and act for and as that Self. Let us follow the lines of the law of our own being — compassion, love, helpfulness for all — and then we shall be able to understand ourselves and the natures of all others. Then we shall be able to help men in a way they are sometimes not aware of; we shall be able to help leaven the whole lump.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THOUGHTS ON THE "BHAGAVAD-GITA"

THERE ARE various ways of understanding the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is part of the epic of the Mahabharata war. Perhaps one of the best is to see all the characters as representing the different principles and powers of man.

The Kurus are the blind king (who represents the physical body) and his sons (the lower material human principles), the chief one being Duryodhana (kama-manas, desire-mind, *i.e.*, lower brain consciousness caught up with kama-desire). They are the elder branch of the family, because the lower material principles have to be built up and developed before the higher principles (the Pandavas) can incarnate. Hence the latter are called the younger branch. Dhritarashtra was incapacitated for ruling by his blindness (the body being just an instrument), but all the same he retained the throne, while it was his eldest son, the "evil-minded Duryodhana," who really ruled. By trickery the Pandavas were sent into exile (*i.e.*, human beings began living as though they were simply matter-beings, with no soul or spirit). Attempts were made, even by Krishna (the spirit in man) at conferences, to peacefully share out the kingdom with justice, but the Kurus refused to give up anything; so finally war had to be declared.

Arjuna represents the Manasic Ego who links both spirit and matter. But, while occupying a personality, the Manasic Ego does not see clearly, because it has come to identify itself with the body, the senses, the astral body, the energies and desires and the ordinary brain consciousness. That is why Arjuna is between the two armies. So are we all, when we begin to wake up to the fact that there are two selves in us. He is despondent because it seems to him that he has to give up or destroy everything he has thought of as himself. We all find it difficult to get beyond the idea that we are Mr. This or Monsieur That, or Signor Somebody, or whatever the personal nature may be.

The recognition and fear on the part of the Kurus that their army is inadequate arises because of the fact that the lower nature, sometimes called the animal nature in us, does know, in its heart, even while it is blindly resisting, that the spirit is the higher, the supreme Lord. Sometimes our conscience, the voice of our higher nature, tells us what to do or what not to do, and our personal nature really knows that it should obey that voice, still it kicks against it because of what it *wants* to do, or even perhaps because of what it has been conventionally

brought up to think right. If we give in to the lower it is "weakness." we are all Arjunas, as personal egos, whose duty is to fight what is not good, or whatever limits the spiritual nature. The conch-shells represent the powers appropriate to each of the human principles.

The caste system, as it has been corrupted and made unjust by selfish people, is a distorted reflection of the natural karmic division of work that people have to perform; eventually they have to learn it all. The Brahmin is the one who influences and inspires ideas and values. This class includes not only spiritual and other teachers, but also writers, creative artists, etc. The Kshatriya (warrior) has to protect the community, to defend law and order. He is the ruler, the administrator, and also the reformer who has to fight evil of all kinds. The Vaishya is the one whose natural duty is to look after the material welfare of the community, to balance the economy and so on, while the Shudra or servant class includes all who are needed to carry out the actual physical work. All are absolutely necessary, and if we look around us, we will see people who fit naturally into one or other of these "castes," though there is, at the present time, some "confusion of castes."

There is no injustice, since everyone has to go, by means of reincarnation, through all four castes — to learn to obey as well as to give orders, to learn to serve and give value with material things, and to learn to teach values, which is also to serve, with spiritual ideas. Our present life is, under karma, the outcome of past efforts and errors, and wherever we are, there is a lesson there to help on our evolution.

For understanding the Mahabharata war, the various human principles can be seen as having these four functions. Krishna, the Higher Self, is the teacher, Arjuna is the warrior who has to conquer, control and rule the lower principles, representing the Vaishya and Shudra castes. They each have their own work.

Finally — and it is a question often asked — Why does Krishna appeal to Arjuna's pride and egotism by emphasizing what people will think of him if he deserts his post? We can only take the next step forward from where we are, and none of us is going to take a sudden leap to selfishness from being egotistic and from doing things in order to have other people's approval. Pride is an aspect of the lower nature among the most difficult to conquer. Animals are said to have vanity, jealousy and so on, but one cannot really say that they have pride. When Krishna appeals to Arjuna's pride, he is saying something Arjuna

can understand, and at the same time, it can be a stepping-stone to something higher and not so personal. A little later on he speaks of that higher, impersonal attitude (II. 47-48), and repeats the idea again and again throughout the book — "Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event." So with us, when our conscience has to battle with our desires, our pride can often help us to do what is right. We must not stop there, of course, but consider it as a step on the way to an attitude that is above personal pride. Like Arjuna, we must rely on the Higher Self as our charioteer.

THIS IS a natural power, like light and heat, and all nature cooperates with it. The reason why we feel one man's presence, and do not feel another's is as simple as gravity. Truth is the summit of being; justice is the application of it to affairs. All individual natures stand in a scale, according to the purity of this element in them. The will of the pure runs down from them into other natures, as water runs down from a higher into a lower vessel. This natural force is no more to be withstood than any other natural force. We can drive a stone upward for a moment into the air, but it is yet true that all stones will for ever fall; and whatever instances can be quoted of unpunished theft, or of a lie which somebody credited, justice must prevail, and it is the privilege of truth to make itself believed. Character is this moral order seen through the medium of an individual nature. An individual is an encloser. Time and space, liberty and necessity, truth and thought, are left at large no longer. Now, the universe is a close or pound. All things exist in the man, tinged with the manners of his soul. With what quality is in him, he infuses all nature that he can reach; nor does he tend to lose himself in vastness, but, at how long a curve soever, all his regards return into his own good at last. He animates all he can, and he sees only what he animates. He encloses the world, as the patriot does his country, as a material basis for his character, and a theatre for action. A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as the magnet arranges itself with the pole, so that he stands to all beholders like a transparent object betwixt them and the sun, and whoso journeys towards the sun, journeys towards that person. He is thus the medium of the highest influence to all who are not on the same level. Thus, men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong.

—EMERSON

THE THIRTY-SEVEN PRACTICES OF ALL BUDDHAS' SONS

II

[The translation of a Tibetan work composed by the Bodhisattva Thogs-med bzang-po (1245-1369) is concluded here from our previous issue.—Eds.]

(21)

Indulging in objects our senses run after
And drinking salt water are one and the same:
The more we partake, for our own satisfaction,
The more our desire and thirst for them grow.
Thus when we conceive a compulsive attraction
Towards whatever object our senses desire,
Abandon it quickly without hesitation —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(22)

Whatever appears to be truly existent
Is merely what mind in delusion creates;
This mind of ours also is from the beginning
Devoid of an essence inherently real.
Then realizing Truth is beyond the conceptions
We have of the known and the knower as well,
Dispel the belief in inherent existence —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(23)

Whenever we meet with a beautiful object,
Or something attractive which pleases our mind,
Do not be deceived into thinking it differs
In fact from a summertime rainbow:
Though both of them have such a lovely appearance,
Nothing substantial lies behind their facade.
Abandon the drives of compulsive attraction —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(24)

The various ills in our life that we suffer
Resemble the death of our son in a dream;

To hold as the truth what is merely illusion
Is needless exhaustion of body and mind.
For this very reason, when faced with unpleasant
Conditions that normally cause us much grief,
Approach them as if they were only illusion —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(25)

The beings who strive to be Fully Enlightened
Would give up their body pursuing this aim;
With this peerless example, what need is the mention
Of gifts we should make of the objects we own.
Without any hope of return for our kindness,
Not considering even the merit to be gained,
Engage in the practice of generous giving —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(26)

If lacking strict moral control of our conduct
We haven't been able to reach our own goals,
How can we fulfil all the wishes of others?
Undisciplined effort is surely absurd!
We first must renounce our attachment to pleasure
Which binds us so tightly to samsara's wheel,
Then protect all our vows of sworn moral behaviour —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(27)

For all Bodhisattvas with minds set on merit
Who wish to amass a great store of good deeds,
Encounters with those causing harm and destruction
Which test their commitment are mines of great wealth.
For this very reason, abandon resentment
And anger directed towards those who do harm;
Perfect meditation on patient endurance —
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(28)

If Shravakas¹ as well as Pratyekabuddhas,²
 Who work towards Nirvana for merely themselves,
 Exert so much effort fulfilling their purpose
 That were they in flames they'd not stray from their goal,
 Then how much more energy must be expended
 By those of us working for everyone's sake;
 Enlightenment calls for the most perseverance —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(29)

Higher insight that penetrates right to the essence,
 Revealing the true way in which things exist,
 Can only root out our emotional problems
 If mental quiescence is laid as its base.
 Thus surpassing the four formless states of absorption
 We must work to achieve single-minded control
 And the full concentration of deep meditation —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(30)

Perfection of charity, patience and morals,
 Absorption and effort alone won't suffice,
 Without the Perfection of Wisdom these five are
 Unable to bring us to full Buddhahood.
 With the methods of pure Bodhichitta develop
 The wisdom to see that the actor, the act,
 And the acted upon lack inherent existence —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(31)

Without making efforts to analyse clearly
 Delusions we have and mistakes we commit,
 Then even though outwardly practising Dharma,
 We still may perform many non-Dharmic deeds.

¹Literally, a listener, or student who attends to the religious instructions. But in Buddhism it denotes a person who works only for his own Nirvana, release from suffering, and who relies on a teacher throughout his entire training.

²A person who works only for his own release from suffering, but who does not rely on a teacher during the last stages of his training.

For this very reason, let's try to examine
 Mistakes and delusions, the faults we possess,
 Then afterwards try to remove them completely —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(32)

While speaking of others, the force of delusion
 May cause us to dwell on the flaws they possess;
 Should those we find fault with be Bodhisattvas,
 Our own reputation will suffer instead.
 So avoid the mistake of disparaging others
 Who've entered upon Mahayana's³ great path;
 Only the fault that we have should we mention —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(33)

Domestic disputes with our friends and relations,
 To gain their respect or the things we feel due,
 Will leave us unable to listen to Dharma,
 Unable to study or meditate well.
 Since danger is found in the homes of our patrons,
 As well as in those of our family and friends,
 Abandon attachment we have to these households —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(34)

The words of abuse that we utter in anger
 Cause others much pain by disturbing their mind;
 And we who are striving to be Bodhisattvas
 Will find that our practice will surely decline.
 So seeing the faults that arise from harsh language,
 Which those who must hear find unpleasant and rude,
 Abandon abuse directed towards others —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(35)

Defiled types of actions will soon become habits
 As we grow accustomed to base states of mind;

³The path leading to the Full Enlightenment of Buddhahood.

Strenuous effort will then be required
 For the force of opponents to counter these stains.
 So armed with the weapons alertness and memory,
 Attack such defilements as lust on first sight;
 Remove these obstructions that hinder our progress —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(36)

In short then, whatever we do in whatever
 Condition or circumstance we may confront
 Should be done with the force of complete self-awareness
 Which comprehends fully the state of our mind.
 Then always possessing alertness and memory,
 Which keep us in focus and ready to serve,
 We must work for the welfare of all sentient beings —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(37)

All merits we gain from the efforts we're making
 To put into practice these virtuous ways,
 Which we do for the sake of removing the suffering
 Endured by the limitless mothers we've had,
 We must dedicate purely for them to be Buddhas,
 With wisdom which sees that both they and ourself
 As well as this merit all lack true existence —
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

By carefully following all of the teachings
 My most holy Gurus have imparted to me
 Concerning the meanings of sutra and tantra
 Explained by the Buddhas and masters of old,
 I have written this work on the practices numbering
 Thirty and seven of all Buddhas' Sons
 To benefit those who desire to follow
 The path that all Sons of the Buddhas must tread.

Because of my poor intellectual powers
 And the meagre amount of training I've had,
 I haven't been able to write polished verses

In metre and style which would please those with skill;
 But as I've relied on the words of the sutras
 And all that my most holy Gurus have taught,
 I am certain that this is without any errors;
 This truly is what Buddhas' Sons have all done.

However, because the extent and the depth
 Of the great waves of conduct of all Buddhas' Sons
 Are hard to be fathomed by someone of limited
 Powers of intellect as is myself,
 There are bound to be faults, contradictions in meaning,
 Disjointed connections and many such flaws;
 So most holy Gurus, I beg your indulgence,
 Be patient with all the shortcomings I have.

With pure Bodhichitta of ultimate Voidness,
 Yet relative nature of mercy and love,
 Devoid of extremes of this worldly existence
 And passive absorption in blissful release,
 May all sentient beings receiving the merit
 Amassed by the effort I've made in this work
 Soon reach your attainment, O great Lokeshvara,
 All-seeing protector with love for us all.

FOR THOUGHTS alone cause the round of rebirths in this world; let
 a man strive to purify his thoughts. What a man thinks, that he
 is: this is the old secret.

—*Maitrayanyupanishad*

THE PATH OF THE DISCIPLE

THE SUBJECT of Discipleship is a holy and sacred one. It has to be understood not only with our mind but also with our heart, for it is not just intellectual but is essentially devotional.

The image of the path is itself a very suggestive one and has been used down the ages by all the great spiritual Teachers of humanity. If there is a path, then it follows that it must lead to a particular destination. The path of discipleship leads to the blessed feet of the Masters, or the spiritual Teachers of mankind. It is a path of renunciation, which is different from the path of spiritual liberation or emancipation. Liberation implies entering into Nirvana and enjoying the peace and bliss which it has in store for the individual who has reached perfection and finished the round of births and deaths. But there is a possibility greater than this, and it is to renounce Nirvanic bliss for the purpose of helping suffering humanity and elevating it. Theosophy makes it clear that there are those great living men who have chosen the path of renunciation and who have remained with humanity, guiding and protecting it.

The path of discipleship, then, begins in renunciation and ends in renunciation and is under the direct jurisdiction and guidance of those who have chosen renunciation against liberation, or the great Masters of Wisdom, who are also called the Elder Brothers of humanity. So the two concepts — the lofty concept of the great living perfected spiritual Teachers and that of the path which is under their protection and which leads to them — go together.

Chelas or disciples are links or bridges between the world of the great Mahatmas or Masters and the world of ordinary men and women. Masters need companions to do their work in the outside world, and disciples are those who have by reason of merit and self-exertion constituted themselves the companions of these great Masters.

All of us as human souls are pilgrims, for we are emanations from the Divine and on our return path thereto. So from one point of view every one of us is walking on a path; but only at a specific point on that inner path of evolution does the path of discipleship begin, through the formation of a conscious purpose and the beginning of the needful training. The formation of a conscious purpose marks the awakening of the consciousness of the individual to the existence of the Great Ones and the path to them. Before this conscious purpose is formulated,

Theosophy advises every aspirant, every would-be disciple, to be very, very cautious and to examine his motive for finding an entrance to the path of discipleship. Purity of motive is a requisite, and a pure motive is an unselfish motive. Uttermost renunciation is required right from the beginning for treading the path. The would-be disciple must forget himself and think only of helping the great Masters of Wisdom and of Compassion in their self-appointed task — the spiritual service of the human race. It is the desire for service, to be the better able to help and teach others, that must be the motive prompting the individual. The resolve to have such a motive and to walk the path must not be made in a moment of enthusiasm, but must be the outcome of mature deliberation with full understanding of the implications of such a conscious resolve.

In Shankaracharya's *Vivekachudamani* the pupil asks the Master what he must do to reach to wisdom, and the Master gives four steps: The first is *Shraddha*, which means not blind belief but enlightened faith. It requires a deepening of conviction through study, application and promulgation of the great Eternal Verities. Without faith it is not possible to sustain one's efforts to walk the path of chelaship, for it is not a path that is going to be walked in a few years; it will require many, many successive incarnated existences of uninterrupted effort, with a determined will and steadfast perseverance. The second qualification is *Bhakti* — devotion — to the teaching and to the teacher. We do not have to go in fruitless search of a teacher. We have the teaching given to us in the recorded message of Theosophy, and from the teaching we shall go to the teacher, provided we have true devotion. "The first step in true magic is devotion to the interests of others," to the needs of suffering humanity. The third qualification is *Dhyana*, meditation. A disciple is essentially a man of meditation. The patient dwelling of the mind upon that which is to be realized enables that mind to gain realization. Great ideas rule the world, and the great Ideators or Contemplators of great ideas are the living Masters. The fourth step is effort at true *Yoga* or union between the consciousness embodied in the human personality and that of the Higher Self, our Divine Parent. Between the two consciousnesses there must be a bridge of communication.

There are certain obstacles in the way of one who desires to enter the path of discipleship and serve humanity. The greatest obstacles are allurements of the world and our desire to be recognized and respected by our fellow beings. On this path of discipleship the only power which

the disciple should covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men. Complete self-abnegation is required. If there is any worldly ambition or selfishness, it has to be eradicated before the individual is fit to walk the path.

For treading this path, the needful training and discipline are required. But it is discipline which is self-imposed and not imposed by someone from outside, not even by one's Guru. For, the disciple's own discrimination has to be unfolded. In all spiritual endeavours the effort must be made by the individual himself. There can be no compulsion or even persuasion. One of the Masters has stated: "Our cause needs missionaries, devotees, agents, even martyrs perhaps. But it cannot demand of any man to make himself either."

Ours the task to be such victorious disciples who answer such a call, and constitute ourselves the living links between the world of the Masters and the world of ordinary human beings.

Question.—If Masters really exist, why do they not make themselves known to earnest seekers after truth, and especially to such as are working for the good of mankind? And why do they not effectuate peace on earth and right education of the young?

Answer — This question has been very frequently answered, and even by the Masters themselves. As to the last part, they said in the *Occult World* that if it were possible to alter the state of things and to make a peaceful earth and a right humanity without following the law of evolution, they would willingly do it, but mankind can only be altered step by step. They have also stated that they do not make themselves objectively known to believers in them except in those cases where those believers are ready in all parts of their nature, are definitely pledged to them, with the full understanding of the meaning of the pledge. But they have also stated that they help all earnest seekers after truth, and that it is not necessary for those seekers to know from where the help comes so long as it is received. In the *Path* this subject was discussed in its other bearings. Personally I know that the Masters do help powerfully, though unseen, all those who earnestly work and sincerely trust in their higher nature, while they follow the voice of conscience without doubt or cavil.

—W.Q.J.: *The Theosophical Forum*, September, 1893

SCIENCE AND THE PATH OF THE SOUL

Knowledge is man's greatest inheritance; why, then, should he not attempt to reach it by every possible road? The laboratory is not the only ground for experiment; *science*, we must remember, is derived from *sciens*, present participle of *scire*, "to know" — its origin is similar to that of the word "discern," "to ken." Science does not therefore deal only with matter, no, not even its subtlest and obscurest forms. Such an idea is born merely of the idle spirit of the age. Science is a word which covers all forms of knowledge. It is exceedingly interesting to hear what chemists discover, and to see them finding their way through the densities of matter to its finer forms; but there are other kinds of knowledge than this, and it is not every one who restricts his (strictly scientific) desire for knowledge to experiments which are capable of being tested by the physical senses.

—*Light on the Path*

ANCIENT SCIENCE investigates the realm of Spirit as modern science that of Matter. Very often Theosophy, or soul-science, is regarded as the enemy of modern science. This is not really true. There is a wider gulf between Theosophy and creedal religions than between Theosophy and modern science. That there are great divergences in their outlooks and methods cannot be gainsaid. But there can be no conflict between them where the conclusions of science are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact, which has not always been the case.

The greatest help Theosophy has received in this cycle has come from science. What was that help? Science dethroned the religious institution of miracles; and chiefly because of its splendid demonstration the first proposition of Oriental Philosophy and Psychology is now universally accepted even if it be not universally applied, *viz.*:

There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law — eternal, immutable, ever active. Apparent miracle is but the operation of forces antagonistic to... "the well-ascertained laws of nature."

Science has shown beyond question that Law reigns in Nature and that everything without exception is an effect from a cause. But as it has so far dealt mainly with the outer crust of living Nature, confining itself to the use of its own inductive method of reasoning and research, it has not succeeded in seeing the Law at work on the moral plane

of the human kingdom, however vast it has stretched the universe of atoms.

Science wields a tremendous influence on the human mind. Claims of infallibility are made on its behalf. When Darwin wrote his *Origin of Species* science was quite sure of its own infallibility. Though humble expressions of "we do not know" are becoming more frequent, even its present-day attitude is one of superiority which laughs at the suggestion that there may exist a different approach to knowledge of Nature and Nature's laws. And yet, science today does not hold quite the authoritative position it did, mainly because its fallibility has been exposed by itself. What science says today it unsays tomorrow. But the legend of scientific infallibility dies a lingering death; what "science says" is still an irrefutable truth to many, especially if they understand it imperfectly, as is generally the case.

For this reason among others the moral responsibility of science towards society assumes vast proportions. What steps are being taken to fulfil this duty?

There is a double aspect to this problem. On the one hand, discoveries and inventions are sometimes being put to petty and even degrading uses. They introduce ugliness, multiply sense-objects not necessary for healthy and decent living, enhance sense-life which weakens and deadens high and noble thinking, and generally lower the right standards of social well-being. Not the invention, but the commercial use made of it, has been wrong. The other aspect is far more dangerous and degrading, where scientific knowledge and power are not only commercially exploited but shamefully prostituted — as, for instance, in the invention of more and more deadly weapons of warfare and destruction. The scientist's moral responsibility to humanity is crucial. Have those who have attained to knowledge the moral right to pass it on to others, fully aware that it will be used for deteriorative and even destructive purposes? This is an acute problem, hotly debated, and on its right solution depends the future of civilization, and of science itself.

Then, another problem: Science is no longer materialistic as it was in the 19th century or even in the first half of our century; yet it persists in its view, in spite of onslaughts from various directions, that human thought, will and feeling are products of the brain. The thinker, the human soul, as a separate and distinct entity using the body with its sense-orifices, entering it at birth and leaving it at death, is a truth not looked upon favourably by science. The survival of human pas-

sions after the death of the body, their disintegration and subsequent reintegration, the attraction of the immortal soul to a new incarnation, are subjects still generally ignored in serious scientific discussion. The subject of reincarnation, however, is slowly coming to the fore. But there is more of theorizing than of actual knowledge on these topics.

Now, the ancients claimed *knowledge* of these subjects and it is high time that science became less presumptuous. The claims of the old-world heroes cry aloud as archaeologists excavate buried cities of thousands of years in age. Their work in metal and colour, their knowledge of sanitation and town-planning, and of many other arts, stagger the beholder of these marvels of yore. These old-world masters have made strange claims of possessing unbelievable powers and their visible feats call for a respectful consideration of those claims. They built Pyramids and Pagodas, they created Angkor and painted at Ajanta, they worked with gold and made glass, they knew the science of numbers and used the Zodiac. How did they achieve all these? By animalism and instinct? Still more, their sublime philosophic ideas — were these the products of infant minds? And these same ancients who knew how to produce fire, to grow wheat, to cook food, talked of pre-natal life and post-mortem states, and evolved a science full of details about the evolution of the soul. A more serious, not an academic but a practical examination of Ancient Science and its propositions is overdue, and the world is poorer because, fighting the dogmatic attitude of religions, science has become entrenched in its own dogmas.

The two urgent requirements of modern science seem to us to be: (1) assignment of social and ethical values to its knowledge, discoveries and inventions; and (2) reorientation of its enquiry and investigation, seeking for new methods once rife in the old world. In more than one branch, science has reached the dead wall of invisibility. Microscopes fail in their power, exquisite balances in their function, as matter is now the stuff of which dreams are made. It looks as if the power of mind over matter is going to be defeated unless, leaving the beaten track of the past, science strikes the highway of the scientist-philosophers of Egypt, Chaldea and ancient Aryavarta, who dreamed bold dreams and realized them by the power of their own spiritual faculties.

NATURE'S VEILS

[Reprinted from *The Path*, September 1896.—EDS.]

IT IS inevitable that in Nature, which is the veil cast by Spirit over itself, there should be many illusions. Just as in outer Nature the sun is the mist dispeller, so when the spiritual Sun pours its radiance upon the Soul of man, out of that soul-substance, primeval and multiform, germ after germ of ancient thought, deeply hidden under the action of the centuries, is evoked, is evolved, is dispelled. Mist-like they arise one by one, unfolding themselves under the eye of the Soul, a processional of dreams. Now a hope, now a dread; now a memory serene and now a doubt infernal; now a resplendent promise has fulfilment, and now a tireless torment fastens its fangs in the heart. The Soul of man, observant of that nature which has been created only for its purposes, stands like a witness receiving testimony, or like the spectator of a drama framed for its edification. This Nature, which is its material vehicle, its instrument for use in material life, it must know to the very depth and breadth thereof; it must probe, comprehend and take control of it all, before it can know itself.

This gradual conquest of matter, or Nature, by the Soul, might be a process as calm as science, as continuous as fate. The sun, its shining unimpeded, would dispel these miasmatic forms and the still deeps of space would lie reflecting that Sun. Nature conquered, the Soul in that purified garment, robed whitely in the "blood" sacrifice of Life, rounds her cyclic period and hides her back to Spirit. This purifying "blood," of which the Scriptures tell us, is that red desire which fills full the heart of man, engorging its free and spiritual action, clogging its etherial arteries with germs of desire; desire, whose heat inflames, whose astringent self-hood contracts, whose accumulations fester and destroy. As the human blood has its marvellous play, its swift alterations of form under the microscopic lens, so to the eye of the seer this force of desire blossoms out upon the surface of the mind in form after form, ever changeable, ever varying and elusive, though their stable root is desire. Yet were the witness uninfluenced, the spectator not identified with the spectacle, the lesson were soon learned, the kingdom swift of conquest, the goal secure.

At this point, however, we meet that chief of illusions, that veil of *Maya* nearest *Maya's* self. For there exists in Nature that element of

egotism, *Ahankara*, or self-identification, and Nature, casting up this element, identifies herself with the drama and gives a bias for or against the spectacle. The image thus put forward confuses the too attentive Soul. It is as if the moon, reflected upon the waters, were to see that reflection claim to be herself, and were to lend herself to the cheat. The Soul is bewildered by this action of the element of *Ahankara* in Nature, and accepts this reflected imaged as the true and only Self.

It may be asked, Why is the Soul thus bewildered? Why does not the Soul remain unconcerned? Perhaps the nearest approach to an answer that can be given is this: That by virtue of the attractive, power of Nature, the Soul is drawn down along the lines of force to that form of her own projection and transfers her energies to that seductive image instead of lifting Nature to herself. It is the old tale of Narcissus the beautiful, who fell in love with his own face mirrored in the waters of the world, and lay pining with desire by all the streams, neglecting the missions of the gods. So the Soul plunges more and more of herself into Nature under its attraction and impulsion and suffers her own detention there. She sees the action and reaction of her energies on the material plane and amid their convolutions enjoys the fantastic illusion and dreams. The rightful part of the Soul is to raise matter to its own substance and likeness, and this is done when, feeling the spiritual influx, the Soul guided by that power only, descends into matter as uplifter and redeemer, and not as accomplice. The root of the Soul is Freedom. That Freedom confers a power of choice.

Now the Soul, by virtue of this Freedom, has an instrument which nothing but itself can bend or break. That instrument is the will. Each Soul can defy the attractive power of Nature and all her illusions; the mirage can be dispelled by the will's strong radiance and can defeat the self-identifying element by a constant and unremitting presentation to the mind of the mental image of the one, true Self. The mind resists this; it does not "feel" the truth of this ideal and it rebels. Then those who put their trust in feelings, fail to rise; their self-imposed shackles weigh them down. But those who hold fast to the higher conception regardless of the sense of dullness, the want of feeling, the blank and the silence, or the turmoil of the senses, those come in time to find that the mind has at last turned to a new basis of action whence is liberated a fountain of fresh energy.

A true mental image, endowed with spiritual energy, is a living thing and operates of itself upon submissive and reflective matter. No

longer upon the troubled mental waves does the Soul behold a wavering image with a transient life of its own, but in the depths of Nature calmed and stilled she sees her own clear light with the life of the Spirit moving through it, and knowing herself below as above, knowing Nature now as her vehicle and not as her enticer, she evolves that Nature to her own high purposes and to its own highest destiny. And though that Nature falls from her as she re-enters the portals of the Eternal, yet she finds it awaiting her as she re-emerges, her servitor through the evolving ages.

These images before spoken of are veils of *Maya*. And there is one, more deadly than any other. I would fain speak of it in accents of the heart which might penetrate to the core of every comrade heart that feels the beat of mine. That veil is Doubt. It is the darkest thing that ever crawled forth from matter to spread its slime upon the image of the Soul. It paralyses the will. It destroys the spontaneity of the heart. It raises a wall between us and Masters.

What is this Doubt? At its root is Vanity, *Maya's* self. The very presence of a doubt shows plainly that I am thinking of myself in a purely personal light. It is a perversion of normal Vanity, by which, after thinking of myself as something fine or great, I fall into self-lamentation and tremble before myself when I find that I am small.

Small, weak, a poor failure in his personal nature every man is when he relies on that alone, and he oscillates between vanity and self-doubt like a pendulum wound up by Time. Self-doubt is the subtlest form of vanity because it is the most deceptive. We say that we are free from vanity at least, because we are so humble, so modest, and we fail to see that self-doubt is but another mode of being occupied with one's self, and a mode in which the vainest man does not outdo us. Dwelling in thought upon the true Self is the only corrective and helper.

Doubt of another is the same thing. It also is doubt of the true Self being all. To think of another as being mere lower human nature and no more; to think that here in my fellow being is no saving soul power which might in an instant descend and snatch him away to a spiritual glory before our dazzled eyes; to refuse to recognize in any man or woman that soundless AUM which abides in every atom and is above and around all, this is to cast a poisoned net upon our fellow combatants, struggling in the arena of Life, and drag them to the Earth.

Oh, Arjuna! Thou art immortal. Arise! Take the sword of the

will in hand, call up thy fellows on the field of battle and fight on, through Nature to over-Nature; through matter, the hydra-headed, to Spirit, the one. Why doubtest thou the soul of thy fellow-man? Yet to doubt thine own is no less sin. Both mental acts deny the Self. *Thou art That.*

Every hour that strikes upon the face of Time is the outcome of thy Soul's own law. Why, then, doubt any of these hours? Why not accept them all? Call them good or call them evil, they are the Soul's messengers. They bring new gifts; they take back gifts outworn, gifts no longer pertinent to the purposes of thy Soul. Let them come! Let them go! Release, too, that strong desire-grip of thine on sentient life — and, having relaxed that grip, let thyself go also; move freely up and down the whole of Life, accepting it all as thine own will and law. Then seeing but thyself everywhere, thyself and mind shall merge into that higher Self and doubt shall be no more. "He who sees Ishwara everywhere equally dwelling, he seeth."

In every event of Life there is a moment, brief perhaps as an eye-wink, in which the voice of the Soul is heard. It should be listened for. We hear it speak oftener than we think. When heard we do not always hold fast to it. We suffer mind to arise like a specious pleader presenting its own bias and calling that "the facts of the case." These facts are argued before us, and when we do not accept the bias, as often as not we reach no conclusion and drift upon the current of circumstance, or else the evidence of our senses decides, and we act upon what we call the sound basis of fact and reason, and go sadly hand in hand with Nature on the rounds and tasks of slaves. Cast material facts away and bow thyself when the true Judge speaks.

Who art thou, oh Mind, that thou shouldst decide, when thine office is only to report what thou hast seen in matter under the guidance of thy Soul? Unguided thou hast seen, and given in a false, an incomplete report! the faithless servant, the perjured one, is handed to the executioner, cast into the prison of doubt, harried in a mental hell. Why not ask counsel from the deep inner heart in each event? Why not follow that counsel through every surge of doubt and beat of pain? Only by holding fast to this light can we increase its action. Only by going slow when we do not sense it can we assist the re-emergence of that calm monitor. Is it not heard? Then turn to Duty. Plain, simple Duty is an unerring guide. Is thy word pledged? Redeem it at every cost. Has Life placed thee where thou art? Pay the full debt; thou canst

never stand upright until it is discharged.

Just so surely as we accustom ourselves to listen to the debate of the mind, that debate will increase. It is based upon false premises, for the vital question is, not what a man shall do, but how shall he do it; his mental attitude is all. Secure an attitude of trust in the Self, and every act alike is offered upon the altar. One of the finest mental acts I ever witnessed was that of a man of business training, a shrewd, keen observer, whose powerful place in life depended upon his ability to grasp and weigh facts. In a moment when spiritual trust was required, that man was found to cast aside his whole mental equipment and to act from a basis of purest faith.

Such strong Souls are to be saluted of all; they are the vitalizing centres of all great movements; they rally their fellows to them from the ends of the world, for when Soul thus calls to Soul the earth is shaken and gives up her living dead; the skies are riven and the gods come down to dwell with men and teach them.

—JASPER NIEMAND

DESIDERATA

(Things to be desired)

Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly and listen to others. Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself. Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth. Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

—An extract from a plaque found in
Old Saint Paul's Church, Baltimore.
Dated 1692.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

C. P. Snow, the celebrated scientist-*cum*-novelist who died recently, will be remembered, not just for the novels which he wrote more or less by way of relaxation from the rigours of pure research, but more for the intellectual controversy that he triggered off in 1959 by his Rede Lecture at Cambridge on his favourite theme of "two cultures." The relevance of this controversy, which brought him international reputation, is examined by Hariharan Poonjar in *Free Press Journal* for July 6:

Lord Snow's thesis was that because of the artificial dichotomy drawn by western educationists between arts and science, the educational institutions didn't produce well-rounded and balanced individuals. And the greatest victims were those who studied literature and arts in the universities, for they neither acquainted themselves with the facts of modern science which revolutionized life and society vastly, nor absorbed its temper and spirit. The result was that they were really half men, but the prevalent institutional approach and educational tradition were such as to make them believe that they were really full men even intellectually superior to the scientists and technologists.

Lord Snow's criticism of the education system was rational and substantial and it had an impact on intellectual circles. . . . Snow was mainly attacking the British pattern. And he was justified in that.

Though basically this was an educational controversy, it rocked the literary circles more than any other. . . . Snow did not delve deep into the fundamental issues concerning the relations between science and literature and as such he could not come up with an integrative philosophy. . . . Snow's problem was basically administrative. How to reorganize the education system integrating science and humanities so that there could be just one common culture? Indian education, which was patterned after the British model, also suffers from this artificial division. The "foundation" course which the Bombay University recently introduced is intended to tackle this problem, though students here are reluctant to study "unwanted" subjects. . . .

The scientists are transcending their cultural barrier. As to literary men and social scientists, they can no more keep themselves aloof from the impact of the physical sciences. The right type of education, as Snow insisted, must prepare everyone to develop into a balanced individual quite at home with all the

branches of what can be called the "knowledge industry."

Education has tried to divorce science from life, which accounts for the discord in the various spheres of life and for the narrow-mindedness on the part of many men of science. H.P.B. persistently maintained that the science of her day was most unscientific in brushing aside without investigation the explanations of mystical philosophies. The Theosophical view of man, she averred, was never apprehended except by those who sought to combine the gleanings of truth accumulated through threshings in many fields. She warned also that the Theosophists of her time could easily become "sterile" if they drifted off on to some "sandbank of thought" and neglected the great enterprise of synthesizing diverse beliefs — something which Theosophists of the present day would do well to bear in mind.

We need whole men today, even more than in preceding stages of history. We must now seek to humanize the sciences and enlarge and coordinate them with the other disciplines. Education need have no conflict. What we require is a sort of brotherhood among all those who in the various branches of learning seek to understand and guide man in his relationship to the universe.

It is generally believed that no real progress is possible unless the standard of living of the masses in the so-called "underdeveloped" or "third" world is raised, so that they can enjoy all the comforts and conveniences that the "developed" nations have access to. Not much thought is given to the primary question: What is a high standard of living? We hear a great deal about the American way of life and many apishly aim at adopting it. But there are snags.

In an editorial in *Saturday Review* for June 1980, Norman Cousins reveals that surface appearances are deceptive and that there is much that is a cause for grave concern in the American way of life. He writes in part:

On the surface, it would appear that the American people have never been in better shape. Certainly, the statistics are auspicious. According to the current report of the U.S. Surgeon General, life expectancy at birth for the average American is moving well up into 70-plus years — contrasted with 47 years at the beginning of the century. . . .

Despite these gains, other threats to life are increasing. The

grisly fact about life in the United States is that accidents and murder are replacing disease as the prime killers — especially of the nation's young people. Murder has become the greatest single cause of death among nonwhite American youths. Last year, firearms claimed the lives of 50,000 in the 15- to 24-year-old age group. Handguns are the most frequently used weapons. For the population as a whole, the United States now has the highest murder rate of any major nation in the world. Our 10.2 homicides per 100,000 people compares with 1.3 for Japan, 1.1 for Sweden, 1.0 for Great Britain, and 0.9 for France.

Next to murder weapons, automobiles are the most lethal devices in the United States. About 2 million Americans were disabled last year in automobile accidents, and almost 50,000 were killed. More than half of the casualties were under the age of 24.

Still another social problem is represented by the increased use of alcohol and drugs, once again especially among young people. About 80 per cent of teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 have had experience with liquor. About 3 per cent drink daily. The percentage of high-school students who come to class intoxicated at least once a month has doubled in the past 15 years — from 10 to 20 per cent.

In 1950, drug abuse was virtually nonexistent in the United States. Only 2 per cent of the entire population at that time had sustained experience with such narcotics as cocaine, heroin, and marijuana. By 1976, 60 per cent of the 18- to 25-year-old group had used marijuana; 20 per cent had "graduated" to the harder drugs.

One of the most disturbing facts to emerge from the Surgeon General's report concerns the increased incidence of venereal infections. Venereal disease has replaced smallpox, tuberculosis, and diphtheria as the disease posing the biggest threat to our youth. An estimated 12 million young Americans today are carrying sexually transmitted diseases.

Pregnancy is now also a major risk for American teenage girls. About 1 million adolescents became pregnant last year, 300,000 of whom were under the age of 15. Children born of these mothers carry all sorts of disabilities, beginning with low birth weight. An additional health threat with pregnancy becomes apparent in the fact that at least three out of 10 teenage pregnancies are aborted. . . .

The clear need is for an all-out educational effort — not just for youngsters but for their parents. It is estimated that two

thirds of unmarried boys and girls in their teens have engaged in sexual intercourse. . . . The Surgeon General is correct in believing that contraception would reduce the number of teenage pregnancies. Parents and educators, however, should also address themselves to the more fundamental question concerning sexual precociousness and promiscuity.

Obviously, none of these problems sprang into being overnight. They are the result of a wide range of interactive causes involving many segments of the society. They do not exist outside ourselves but are the reflection of internal weaknesses and defaults that have been accumulating over a long period of time. It is a serious error to suppose, therefore, that the total situation lends itself to a quick fix. The corrective changes will come about, as they have come about in the past, when enough people decide to take personal responsibility. Before we celebrate the conquest of many diseases in the United States we have the obligation to show progress in the conquest of violence and moral breakdown.

Under the title "The Antecedents of Civilization in the Indus Valley," an article in the August issue of *Scientific American* sheds light on the excavations at Mehrgarh in Pakistan, which have uncovered farming settlements that flourished in the region 7,000 years ago, 3,000 years earlier than the Indus civilization. The authors, Jean-François Jarrige and Richard H. Meadow, write:

The earliest civilizations of the Old World rose in river valleys: the Tigris-Euphrates of western Asia, the Nile of North Africa and the Indus of southern Asia. Of the three civilizations that of the Indus is the least known. This is the case even though two of its cities, Mohenjo-Daro in the south and Harappa in the north, were among the largest of the third millennium B.C., and its towns and villages extended from the Arabian Sea to the banks of the Amu Darya in northern Afghanistan. Indeed, until the 1970's just how the Indus civilization began was a puzzle.

Now six seasons of work in the Baluchistan region of central Pakistan have uncovered a series of agricultural settlements that first arose more than 3,000 years before Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. The discovery is significant because until then it was believed there was no evidence in the region for a long period of settled agricultural habitation. . . . The excavations are being conducted at the site of Mehrgarh on the Bolan River by the French

Archaeological Mission in Pakistan and the Pakistan Department of Archaeology. They now enable us to see that the social and economic patterns characteristic of the Indus civilization had roots deep in the early prehistory of the region. The site lies at the foot of the Bolan Pass, one of the two most famous routes between the Indus valley and the Iranian plateau. . . .

On first exploring the Mehrgarh area in 1973 we discovered a small mound that proved to contain the remains of settlements dating back to the third and fourth millenniums B.C. After active excavation began in December 1974, it was discovered that the mound was only the most obvious site of a much larger cluster of sites that extended to the Bolan River, almost a kilometer to the north, and covered an area of more than 200 hectares (nearly 500 acres). The cluster did not represent the occupational debris of a single large settlement. Rather it was made up of many smaller settlements, each one established after the complete or partial abandonment of some predecessor. In the course of 3,000 or 4,000 years the remains of these successive settlements came to cover the entire area. . . .

Many seasons of work have shown that the area was occupied by permanent farming settlements. . . . The most recent of a succession of mud-brick structures here has been shown by carbon-14 analysis to date back to the sixth millennium B.C. . . . Among the artifacts are grinding stones and small flint blades showing the sheen characteristic of flint used to cut grain. This indirect evidence suggestive of agriculture is backed more directly by impressions of various cereal grains in the mud debris. . . .

Much work remains to be done at Mehrgarh. The preliminary results of our first six campaigns nonetheless demonstrate that the theoretical models used to interpret the prehistory of southern Asia must be completely reappraised. This rich site provides an archaeological record with a long sequence of occupations. The sequence reveals a process of continuing elaboration that affected cereal cultivation, animal husbandry, crafts, architecture and even ideology. Step by step one can see the stage being set for the development of the complex cultural patterns that became manifest in the great cities of the Indus civilization in the middle of the third millennium B.C.

The article goes on to describe the artifacts of the various chronological periods into which the Mehrgarh settlements are divided. Truly, as H.P.B. declared, "the more archaeology and philology advance, the more humiliating to our pride are the discoveries which are daily made,

the more glorious testimony do they bear in behalf of those who, perhaps on account of the distance of their remote antiquity, have been until now considered ignorant flounders in the deepest mire of superstition." (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 239)

In the *Sunday Review* of *The Times of India* for August 10, Harold M. Schmeck, Jr. writes on "The Power of Human Magnetism." A promising technology of the future, the study of the body's magnetism is said to offer a new and illuminating perspective with many potential uses. Interest in this field has been growing rapidly in recent years and there are many research groups active throughout the world.

Biomedical scientists are discovering [says the author] that the body has its own magnetic fields, generated by minute electrical currents in the brain, heart and other organs. Even the hair follicles on the head generate their own magnetic fields, researchers recently found, suggesting the magnetism might come from the electrical activity of the skin.

Studying this highly personal but very weak magnetism offers scientists an opportunity to watch the body's basic functions from a new and illuminating perspective. Although much of the research is fundamental in nature, many experts in the field see a potential for utilizing the body's magnetism both in the medical clinic and the research laboratory....

"We are talking about a promising technology of the future," says Dr. David Cohen of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), who is one of the pioneers in the study of biological magnetism. "I believe, for example, that within 10 years or so we will see many clinical and research brain measurements made with the magnetoencephalogram."

It has been suggested that birds use the earth's magnetic field in navigation. Recently, scientists at MIT, collaborating with specialists elsewhere, found that some bacteria actually contain magnetic materials, evidently to help them tell up from down — a real problem for organisms so small that the pull of gravity hardly affects them. But no similar uses of, or responses to, magnetism have been found in humans or other mammals.
