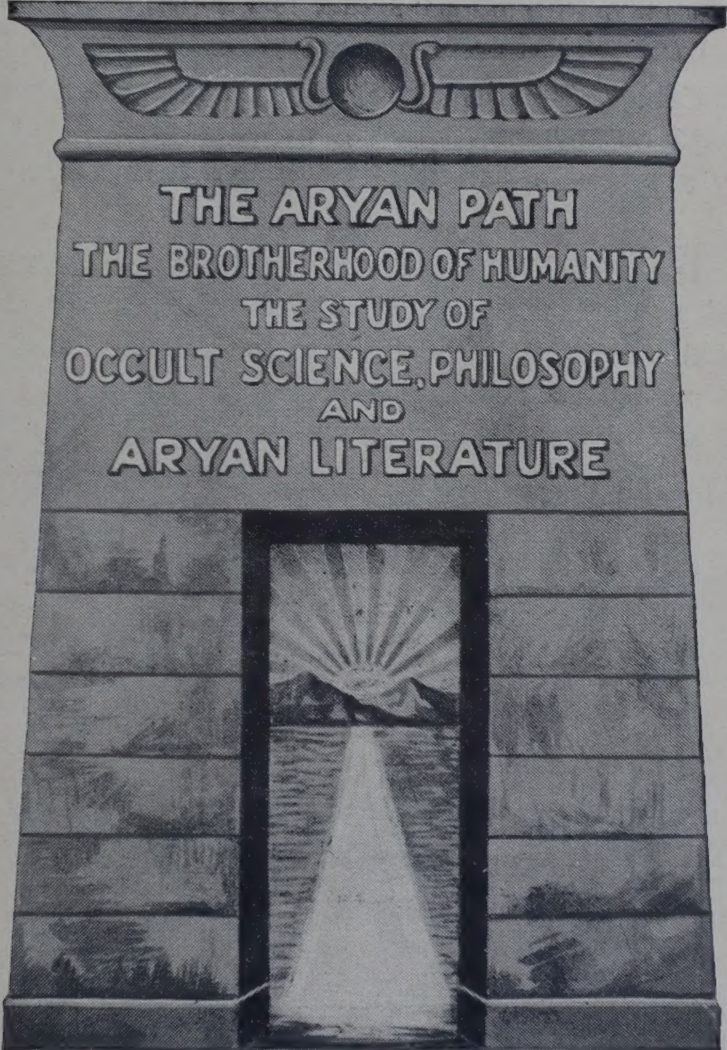




# THE OSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



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

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Vol. XI No. 3

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January 17, 1941

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As the lost jewel may be recovered from the very depths of the tank's mud, so can the most abandoned snatch himself from the mire of sin, if only the precious Gem of Gems, the sparkling germ of the Atma, is developed. Each of us must do *that* for himself, each *can* if he but will and persevere. Good resolutions are mind-painted pictures of good deeds: fancies, day-dreams, whisperings of the *Buddhi* to the *Manas*. If we encourage them they will not fade away like the dissolving mirage in the Shamo desert, but grow stronger and stronger until one's whole life becomes the expression and outward proof of the divine motive within.

— MAHATMA K. H.

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- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



*There Is No Religion Higher than Truth*

BOMBAY, 17th January 1941.

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th January 1941.

VOL. XI. No. 3

## A SPIRITUAL MYSTERY

### IN THE PROGRAMME OF THEOSOPHICAL EDUCATION

In the article reprinted here from *Lucifer*, "The Last Song of the Swan", two names are mentioned: those of Father Damien and of Sister Rose Gertrude, whose sacrificial deeds receive high praise from H. P. Blavatsky. Her reasons for eulogizing the examples set by these two selfless labourers are given in the article. Of greater importance and value is the explanation offered in the light of Esoteric Philosophy of the "spiritual mystery" which these two "Personalities" represent.

Students of Theosophy will do well to study with care this explanation, with the work of "Theosophy School" in mind. In several Centres of the United Lodge of Theosophists an important piece of work is carried on—educating the children, not so much teaching them the tenets of Theosophy as helping them to acquire a Theosophical attitude to the whole of life. The time spent by the Associate who contacts Theosophy as an adult in unlearning "facts" taught in schools and colleges, in unlearning "truths" heard in theological seminaries or taken for granted by imbibing the "religious" atmosphere of temples and the like, is long. How much time and effort are spent, for instance, in learning that God is not what He has been fancied to be; that the origin and the destiny of the human soul are very different from what they have been taken to be; that heaven and hell have been entirely misconceived; that the progress of man as an individual and of humanity *en masse* is not what it has been thought to be; and, above all, that for man's emancipation the inner strength of the human soul has to be substituted for the hope that, somehow, some one will rescue that soul from its prison-house of folly and of sin and will bestow on it the gifts of peace and wisdom. The young whose Karma enables them to contact Theosophy School will save all that time and energy in unlearning false knowledge, and they will shape their actions differently,

provided, of course, that Karma also enables them to go on inhaling the atmosphere of Theosophy.

Be that as it may, we are writing this neither for the struggling adult nor for the fortunate youngster, but for the ardent student who is a labourer in the field of "Theosophy School", doing all that he can to impart knowledge which will enable members of a future generation to grow up with the correct habit of listening to the Voice of Conscience which admonishes from within, to the Voice of Buddhist Wisdom emanating from the ideation of the interior soul and to the Voice of the Inner God, which is that of Compassion.

Unless trained, the Personality is blinded by social upbringing and by secular and religious education. *Avidya* is "the opposite of, or the absence of Knowledge, in the sense of esoteric science, and not 'ignorance' as generally translated". Only very rarely does the phenomenon producing the spiritual mystery of a Father Damien and a Sister Rose Gertrude take place; by the hundred, men and women allow the divinity in them to be silenced; in them "compassion crystallized in our very being" whispers not, for their personalities are "blinded by training and religious education to the real presence and nature of the Higher Self".

The course of Theosophy winds inwards from the senses to the brain, from the brain to Kama-Manas, from the mind to the Soul, from the Soul to the Spirit. Once this central truth is grasped and its ramifications considered, the task of the learner and the teacher, adult or young, is simplified. The "spiritual mystery" has its message for the adult who is acquiring Theosophical knowledge with a view to its application to his own personality, but the youngsters also have to be taught the truth and its implications so that self-reliance and self-sacrifice may be harmoniously developed in their consciousnesses.

If "Theosophy School" represents an important piece of service, the building of a Theosophical home also represents a phase of our promulgation which has a deep significance. Though the institution of the home has greatly deteriorated in modern times, especially in the West, the deterioration is not so great in India, even in the cities, and it has not set in at all in those towns and villages which are not tarnished by Occidental notions. Home as a nursery of occultists of the future incarnations needs more serious consideration from many of our student-servers. The Lodge Platform is, of course, the most important channel for spreading Theosophical ideas; but the influence of a Theosophical home comes next. The atmosphere of a real Theosophical home, like that of a Lodge, ought to be such that within and around its area the sum of human misery will diminish. The cure of human suffering lies within the power of Wisdom and Compassion contained in every inherent idea burnt into the human soul. When false ideas are eradicated, the true ones have a chance to express themselves. When the half-gods go, the Gods arrive.

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## PARACELSUS

Mr. Llewelyn Powys contributes a long article on "Paracelsus" to *The Nineteenth Century and After* for October 1940. The tone, as might be expected of an avowed rationalist, is somewhat flip-pant but the discriminating can sift the gold of evidence from the sand—*pace* Mr. Powys—of the writer's bias. He himself writes that in Paracelsus' company "it is hard to be a materialist, impossible to be an atheist". Some very interesting points emerge from his account of Paracelsus, whom H.P.B. describes as "the greatest Occultist of the middle ages", the discoverer of nitrogen and "the re-discoverer of the hidden properties of the magnet and animal magnetism". And she adds that though, as a Rosicrucian and an alchemist, the "Father of Modern Chemistry" kept his knowledge secret, it would perhaps not prove very difficult for a chemist familiar with Paracelsus' works to demonstrate that oxygen too was known to him.

Philip Bombastes Aureolus Theophrastus von Hohenheim (Paracelsus was the symbolical name he adopted) was born at Einsiedeln in Switzerland in 1493. His father, a medical practitioner, gave him the name Aureole, Mr. Powys mentions, because he "fancied he could discern a kind of nimbus about the head of his gifted little boy, 'a luminous effluence'". After a limited stay at the University Paracelsus renounced the authority of the scholars

and set out on the extended travels which occupied many years of his life. He visited many European countries—the Netherlands (on whose battle fields he served as a surgeon), Russia, Scandinavia, Germany and France "and received a philosopher's stone from an old Jew in Constantinople". He is rumoured to have journeyed as far as India.

Sometimes he would join up with a group of travelling teamsters and, indifferent to the journey's end, would continue with them for months, "fleeting the time carelessly", but never abandoning his search for wisdom along every league of the out-of-the-way turnpikes they travelled...and always he cured the sick and needy without demanding groats.

And wherever he went he experimented, hiring a garret or a cellar with a fireplace for the purpose. Persecuted out of his post of City Physician and Lecturer at Basel he set out once more undaunted on his travels. "The remaining fifteen years of his life were difficult ones. He was in pressing pecuniary difficulties, sometimes in ragged clothing", but he continued to attract disciples whom he initiated "into the first principles that rule the modern world of medicine".

The brilliant mind of the houseless man was never at rest...Robert Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* quotes Paracelsus as saying that sleep is "the chiefest thing in all physic"...but for himself Paracelsus never feared to scant his hours, often waking his disciples to confide to them some new and original notion that had darted suddenly into his eager head. In the diary of Johann Rutner we read "Theophrastus is most laborious, sleeps little, without undressing, throws himself booted and spurred on the bed for some three hours, and ceaselessly, ceaselessly writes."

He wrote many books, investigated and prescribed for many diseases, and gave much thought to theological matters, teaching his views in the Swiss Canton of Appenzel "pleasing no one but the sick whom I healed".

Although he never utterly forsook the Catholic faith and was buried with its ancient rites, his views were independent, and the hard things he had to say of Rome caused the parish priests of Appenzel to hunt him out.

He wrote "God wishes a humble and contrite heart and no devilish holiday observances, offerings or displays...or running to the saints." He vigorously repudiated the popular devil of theology:—

Before the world grows much older, it will be found that the devil has nothing to do with such things, that the devil is nothing and knows nothing, and that such things are the results of natural causes.

H. P. B. reminds us that the peril of propounding heterodox theories was great in those days of the persecution of heretics; and simple prudence would account for Paracelsus' writing in a style that has to be read "within and without".

Mr. Powys regards as fabulous the concepts which Paracelsus "had concocted out of occult lore ancient as the Chaldeans, out of the notions prevailing in the neo-Platonic schoolrooms of Florence, and out of the Holy Writ no less frenzied in its claims than was his own mind". How reconcile Paracelsus' conviction, which he admits, that these concepts were absolutely true with the fact that Paracelsus "seems very early to have begun to suspect all authoritative traditions unverified by experiment" and that "far-sighted inaugurator of the modern method of induction that he was, his confidence in the experiments of eye and hand never faltered"?

We cannot do better than to quote verbatim a number of passages from Mr. Powys's article:—

The favourite conception of this German-Swiss physician gives us the key to his whole philosophy: The words "macrocosm" and "microcosm"... comprehend all. "As it is below, so it is above"... To the vision of Paracelsus, all matter was infiltrated with spirit and all was correlated for a sublime purpose. "Everything is one, and its origin can only be eternal unity"... Matter was always suspected of puissant concealments by Paracelsus... And beneath and above and around these solid "appearances" the atmosphere twanged with invisible beings, which, swift as thought, sped along the aerial galleries of the earth's ozone, beings itinerant to churchyards, gallow-trees, battle-fields, and the homely dwellings of men whose very bedchambers could become unwholesome from the intrusion of Incubi and Succubi.

Paracelsus also taught, though Mr. Powys does not stress the point, that there is nothing dead in Nature. "There exists nothing in which is not a hidden principle of life."

During sleep the sundered body, by which man is connected with the inner nature of the Macrocosm becomes free in its movements, and it may then rise up to the sphere of his ancestors, and converse with the stars... if the life of the sun did not act in the world nothing would grow. The human body is vapour, materialized sunshine... A blossoming flower cannot be made out of mud, nor a man out of material clay...

It is the book of Nature written by the finger of God which I study—not those of scribblers... Let no doctor say the sickness is incurable... he denies Nature with her abundance of hidden powers; he depreciates the great arcana of Nature and the mysteries of creation... If Nature does not wish every man to know, she indicates her teaching to those who understand by parables and mysteries... there are powers by which all secrets of Nature may be discovered.

Paracelsus demanded of his enemies:—

You complain that I have not entered the temple of knowledge through the legitimate door? Galenus and Avicenna, or Nature? I have entered through the door of Nature: her light and not the lamp of an apothecary's shop has illuminated my way.

One of Paracelsus' sayings which Mr. Powys quotes relates to imagination, which he declares

is a great power, and if the world knew what strange things may be produced by the power of the imagination the public authorities would cause all idle persons to go to work.

It would be interesting, if space permitted, to trace the striking parallels between the characters and the careers of Paracelsus and of H. P. B. herself—their tireless travels in pursuit of truth, their scorn of worldly advantages, their vast wisdom, their zeal in the service of humanity and the persecution which both suffered for their courage in declaring the truth and in attacking enthroned error and privilege. It was Paracelsus' zeal for reform, Mr. Powys believes, that prompted the beginning of "that singular campaign of misrepresentation and calumny" that in his lifetime brought Paracelsus to penury, and "after his death continued a resolute and unremitting attempt to discredit his genius almost up to our own day".

It was characteristic of the man that on his premature death at the hands, it is alleged, of enemies, at the age of forty-eight years "his goods he left to his heirs, the poor, miserable, and needy... poverty and want being the only qualifications", and he directed that his body be buried in the ground set aside for the poor.

Mr. Powys remarks, "It was well said by one of his contemporaries, 'In universal philosophy, so arduous, so arcane, and so hidden, no one was his equal.'"

H. P. B. mentions in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 168) how the modern invention of the spectroscope has vindicated Paracelsus' long-ridiculed claim that the composition of man and of the stars is identical and raises the very natural question whether he could "have been so sure of the nature of the starry host, unless he had means of which science knows nothing", namely, "hermetic philosophy and alchemy", a suggestion which acquires added significance from her inclusion (*Raja-Yoga*, pp. 1-2) of Paracelsus among Western men

whose temperamental affinity to this celestial science more or less forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings.

Incidentally, Mr. Powys refers to the "wonderful book on Paracelsus" by Dr. Franz Hartmann, in which the student will indeed find a veritable wealth of wisdom.

---

Until the wise are satisfied,  
I cannot feel that skill is shown;  
The best-trained mind requires support,  
And does not trust itself alone.

—KALIDAS

## OVERCOMING KARMA

"Great Sifter" is the name of the "Heart Doctrine", O Disciple.—*The Voice of the Silence.*

The doctrine of justice is at once the bringer of hope and the striker of fear to human consciousness. Justice makes an appeal to the good in man; it frightens the evil in him and pushes him to the corner of the coward—to dependence on an outside agency: an anthropomorphic God; or, the debasing doctrine of somebody having the power to forgive his sins; or, rites and ceremonies which will win him a ticket to enter heaven. Greater suffering overtakes the coward and compels him to face the truth of his self-made destiny. Those who believe in those falsehoods reject the doctrine of successive lives on earth, but human rejection of nature's laws makes no difference to the working out of those laws. A man may disbelieve in gravitation, but he is under its sway all the same!

The Law of Karma is one of the simplest teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy—"As you sow, so you reap"; but when we begin to study the workings of that Law we soon find that it is, to quote H.P.B., "the most difficult of all our tenets". The central truth of the Law is clear to any mind, but its ramifications are many and most complex. It is easy to see that "the pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn"; but it is not easy to understand *how* "a harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again." Where is it preserved? How does it come back?

Much more difficult becomes the study of Karma when the Theosophical student follows the instructions of his philosophy and tries to work with the Law. What does it mean—to work *with* the Law? How can a student do this when his knowledge of the Law is limited to the basic idea, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"? Even the spirit of kindness and of sacrifice does not protect, for in the practice of charity we go wrong and add to the prevailing confusion. True it is that "inaction based on selfish fear can bear but evil fruit", but how many have not indulged in reckless deeds in the mere hope that somehow sweet fruits would grow? Action based on wish-fulfilment—however pious the wish—allures the student. When he takes the next step, seeing that he must proceed with caution and inner mental detachment, always consulting his code of rules and laws, new problems arise. He who looks upon his life as Probationary, he who values each event as an opportunity for soul-growth, experiences

very puzzling phenomena, not objective events but subjective psychic and psychological stirrings. It is of this stage that the Master K. H. writes:—

The mass of human sin and frailty is distributed throughout the life of man who is content to remain an average mortal. It is gathered in and centred, so to say, within one period of the life of a chela—the period of probation. That, which is generally accumulating to find its legitimate issue only in the next rebirth of an ordinary man, is quickened and fanned into existence in the chela—especially in the presumptuous and selfish candidate who rushes in without having calculated his forces.

Why does this happen? Instead of making the way clear for the resolute server and lover of his fellow-men, why does the Good Law complicate the situation? That aspect of the Law of Karma is thus described by the same great Adept:—

If you would learn and acquire Occult Knowledge, you have, my friend, to remember that such tuition opens in the stream of chelaship many an unforeseen channel to whose current even a lay chela must perforce yield, or else strand upon the shoals; and knowing this to abstain for ever judging on mere appearance.

An instance of the practical application of this aspect of the Law of Karma is also given by the same Master:—

It was absolutely necessary that within the personal experience of those few staunch members (yourself included) the secret working of Karma should take place; that its deeper meaning should be practically illustrated (as also its effects)—on those self-opinionated volunteers and candidates for chelaship who will rush under the dark shadow of her wheels.

W. Q. Judge possessed real love for all those who endeavoured to walk the path of discipleship. Between the lines of many of his writings are hidden hints for the would-be chela; between the lines and within the words of much that he has left behind of his writings are to be found occult instructions—the esoteric soul of formal sentences. On this subject of Karma he has written much and all of it is most valuable, especially (for the esotericist) his "The Moral Law of Compensation" (See *U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 6*). But also of great practical value to the probationary learner are the thirty-one Aphorisms on Karma reprinted in *U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 21*. In this article we will examine some of these aphorisms from the special point of view of the esotericist aspiring to become a chela of the Great Gurus. For one thing, while every

such student understands that each suffers or enjoys the effects of his own Karma, not all see the truth that the Law of Interdependence functions in the process of Karmic adjustments.

The manifesting Karma of each practitioner is but a portion of his accumulated storehouse of Karma which is very large. How is the apportionment of Karma for this life determined? The Ego's prospective vision, at the end of Devachanic existence and before incarnation, plays an important part in the process. Writes H. P. B. :—

At the moment he is reborn on to earth, the *Ego*, awaking from the state of Devachan, has a prospective vision of the life which awaits him, and realizes all the causes that have led to it. He realizes them and sees futurity, because it is between Devachan and rebirth that the *Ego* regains his full *manasic* consciousness, and rebecomes for a short time the god he was, before, in compliance with Karmic law, he first descended into matter and incarnated in the first man of flesh. The "golden thread" sees all its "pearls" and misses not one of them.—*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 135.

Now, if the last thoughts of the dying give colour and trend to the life in Devachan, correspondentially the predominant impresses of the record of Karma form the prospective vision of the Ego and strike the note of what is to come. Out of the vast picture-gallery of his Karma a kind of selective process must take place; the coalescing of certain thought-images creates the "prospective vision of the life which awaits him" and the seer recognizes that it is all just; in the words of Mr. Judge, he "repines not but takes up the cross again". This selective process may be described as the activity of the higher skandhas enveloping the Ego and then come attracted the army of lower skandhas. The selected thought-images form the basis of Karma for the new life; thus the incoming Ego's line of life-meditation is drawn. They cut the canal in which flow the Karmic agents through whom Karmic adjustments will take place. What the retrospective review before death is to the Ego, who passing through the second death enters the state of Devachan, that the prospective review is to the Ego coming out of Devachan and meeting his tanhaic elementals before birth.

The reader will do well to make note of two factors: the line of life-meditation is one; Karmic agents are the other. The first corresponds to the causal aspect, the second to the effect aspect of Karma; the first is related to the free-will phase of Karma, the second to its fate aspect.

Bearing this in mind let us examine certain implications of Aphorisms 4, 5, and 15 :—

No. 4—The apparent stoppage of this restoration to equilibrium is due to the necessary adjustment of disturbance at some other spot, place, or focus which is visible only to the Yogi, to the Sage, or the perfect Seer: there is therefore no stoppage, but only a hiding from view.

No. 5—Karma operates on all things and beings from the minutest conceivable atom up to Brahma. Proceeding in the three worlds of men, gods, and the elemental beings, no spot in the manifested universe is exempt from its sway.

No. 15—Until such appropriate instrument is found, that Karma related to it remains unexpended.

In the first of these it is said that there is no stoppage of Karma but only a hiding from view. In the third it is said that unless an appropriate instrument is found Karma remains unexpended. These instruments are not only other men and women; "gods and the elemental beings" are also involved according to Aphorism No. 5.

Thus in the Karmic precipitation-adjustment, the Karma of each is knit with the Karma of the whole. The correct way of appraising the benefits and the obstacles of Karma is to view the effects of the universal law from the universal point of view. Let us not emphasise "my Karma", "your Karma", "his Karma", but say "our Karma".

The important point to note for purposes of practice is this: as individuals we are more directly concerned with the causal aspect of Karma. On the effect side, the instruments of Karma play an important part, for through them each feels the effects of his own Karma. The analogy of eating and digesting offers a good illustration: in selecting foods to eat, the ego who chooses is the entity directly involved; but once the food is consumed, that entity has to deal, *volens volens*, with the elementals he has absorbed; in the phraseology of Aphorism No. 16, "a man is experiencing Karma in the instrument provided". This does not mean that, because other entities—gods, men, elementals—are involved as instruments of our Karma, we cannot overcome that Karma.

Before we consider the point of overcoming Karma, the practitioner will do well to note the implications of the teaching that changes occur in the instrument. When we say "I wish to overcome my Karma", we mean "I must obtain new instruments through which Karma can precipitate." When this proposition is not adequately understood, we put more emphasis on the instrument, *i.e.*, on the effect side, and therefore we try to change our environment rather than ourselves. By such tactics we do not overcome but only postpone the precipitation of Karma. In Aphorism 29 the law of

Distribution is mentioned ; this law is related to the instruments of Karma ; H. P. B. says that "the interdependence of Humanity is the cause of what is called Distributive Karma." By changing environment we do not alter Karma, but postpone it ; and through the new environment, *i.e.*, through the new instruments, we invite other aspects of Karma. It is necessary for us to distinguish between exhaustion of Karma, which brings into operation new and fresh Karma, and postponement of present Karma by removing ourselves, as far as it lies in our power, from the present environment, and, with the aid of a new environment and instruments, bringing into operation new Karma. Occultism stresses the importance of not running away from Karma but exhausting it.

The right kind of change which follows the exhaustion of Karma is implicit in Aphorism No. 19 :—

Changes may occur in the instrument during one life so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma, and this may take place in two ways : (a) through intensity of thought and the power of a vow, and (b) through natural alterations due to complete exhaustion of old causes.

Two fundamental factors are named : (1) the power of a vow ; and (2) complete exhaustion of old causes. Let us look at both of these from the special view-point of the esotericist.

(1) Deliberate, *i.e.*, will-full and thought-created resolve is in itself a result. Says Mr. Judge :—

We *become* chelas<sup>1</sup> ; we obtain that position in reality because our inner nature is to that extent opened that it can and will take knowledge : we receive the guerdon at the hands of the Law.

Such a vow involving the invocation of the Higher Self very naturally creates a new psychic as well as a new spiritual environment. Not in a moment does this creation take place ; but the making of the vow certainly starts the change, which, in the progress of time, if opportunities are utilized, does produce a complete transformation. The more earnest the aspirant-practitioner, the more thoroughgoing the psycho-spiritual change. To begin with, however, the outer environmental Karma maintains or seems to maintain its *status quo*. The outer change, naturally following as a result of the inner, requires time for manifestation. And more

—that natural change in the outer comes about in so unexpected a manner that the practitioner is more than puzzled. In his impatience and not adequately understanding what is taking place within and how the precipitation from inner into outer takes place, the probationary learner gets dejected. While inner mental struggles increase, the outer environmental obstacles look more formidable. Often the fact is overlooked that the outer obstacles have not changed ; the outer is the same as before, but he has changed within and the outer looks terrible. The temptation to run away from the environment arises but such a course proves fatal, and hence very specific warnings are given against its adoption.

Let us turn to

(2) The complete exhaustion of old causes. A man comes to Theosophy, becomes a student, is inspired to improve himself and takes a vow. This all occurs because of his past Karma. He must have generated causes in the past and, under the influence of the present Theosophical environment to which he is drawn, the old spiritual *skandhas* awake. But, soon or late, fatigue is bound to overtake them and their tendency to slumber once again asserts itself. But for the grand efforts of H. P. B., W. Q. Judge and Robert Crosbie, he would never have contacted the U. L. T. Due to the Theosophical efforts of the Great Masters he has had the opportunity of being impressed and inspired by the force of eternal verities. In this phenomenon is to be found the cause which produces failures and backslidings in Theosophy. How ? In responding to the call of the Esoteric Philosophy the neophyte uses up his good appropriate Karmic stamina ; care is not taken to replenish himself with the same forces ; and the result is backsliding. Many among the students are not new-comers but neither are most of them weather-beaten sailors of Masters' ships ; and so there is dilly-dallying on the part of not a few. Consider the entire new-comers ; how many among them have not said, "This is what I want", and then after a few weeks have stopped attending our meetings ? One of the first duties the learner owes to himself is to take the necessary steps to keep his mental battery adequately charged with the power of Theosophy. Regular attendance at the U. L. T. meetings ; regular study of our text-books ; regular effort at self-improvement as the Esoteric Philosophy describes improvement ; regular participation in the grand work of promulgating Theosophy impersonally from the U. L. T. platform ;—these are the sure ways, nay, the *only* ways, which will prevent the student from lessening his spiritual stamina, and then falling out of the ranks of his colleagues.

<sup>1</sup> "There are many sorts of chelas. There are lay chelas and probationary ones ; accepted chelas and those who are trying to fit themselves to be even lay chelas".  
—W. Q. JUDGE.



But if the student must not allow the exhaustion of his spiritual Karmic stamina, he has to learn the art of completely exhausting the old Karma of his personal nature. This task itself is dependent, in a great measure, on his re-energizing himself by the power of his Vow and by the observance of his occult discipline; these weaken the material and effect aspect of his mundane, personal Karma, and ultimately exhaust it. The practical clue is in Aphorism 25 which speaks of "the line of Karmic tendency".

Birth into any sort of body and to obtain the fruits of any sort of Karma is due to the preponderance of the line of Karmic tendency.

What is the preponderant line of our own Karmic tendency? Is it our spiritual Vow and resolve or something else? In answering these highly practical questions the esotericist is able to give a new and more vital meaning to the words "overcoming Karma". Aphorisms 13, 26 and 27 offer the teaching necessary for our practice on this score.

In Aphorism 12 it is said that "causes already set in motion must be allowed to sweep on until exhausted". The idea conveyed is that we should not worry ourselves with the effects which are like bodily diseases, going out of our system. Our whole civilization labours with the effect side, neglecting the causal. Its educational programmes, its social service plans, its medical science, etc., all deal with effects. Theosophy deals with causes, and prefers to remove soul-hunger and not only bodily hunger.

No. 13—The effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and then the resulting effects represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects.

No. 26—The sway of Karmic tendency will influence the incarnation of an Ego, or any family of Egos, for three lives at least, when measures of repression, elimination, or counteraction are not adopted.

No. 27—Measures taken by an Ego to repress tendency, eliminate defects, and to counteract by setting up different causes, will alter the sway of Karmic tendency and shorten its influence in accordance with the strength or weakness of the efforts expended in carrying out the measures adopted.

In No. 26 the student should note a clause which gives hope. Any particular Karma, left to itself, will exhaust itself in three lives; but it must be left alone, and not many are capable of leaving personal Karmas alone; we slip into interference with them and thus give them life. But turning to the positive work to be undertaken, we find that we have to do three things: (1) Repress Tendencies; (2) Eliminate Defects; (3) Counteract by

New Causes. We have to determine what are the tendencies which should be repressed, the defects which should be eliminated, and, with the aid of our Esoteric Philosophy we have to set up new causes which will mitigate the hindrances of past Karma.

The overcoming of Karma is an inner process. Transformation of the outer environment naturally ensues from that process. We have to learn to increase the assemblage of spiritual forces, to have greater spiritual stamina. Our task is so to engage ourselves in living by the power of Theosophy that the effect-side of our personal Karma does not overthrow us. If we do not spend time and energy in merely fighting our personal Karmas (and, thus lending them the force of our ideation, enable them to live on), but instead gather as much spiritual Karma as possible by creating and sustaining proper causes, freedom from Karmic bondage is bound to result, and more—the power to serve correctly is bound to increase.

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## MONGOLIAN APHORISMS

[This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* Vol. II, p. 491, for August, 1888.—EDS.]

If thou lovest nature, thou lovest man. If thou hatest man, thou hatest nature, for the two are inseparable.

Learn from all thou comest in contact with. Learn from the wicked as from the good; do, as the wise bee doeth, which extracts sweet honey from the bitterest plant, truly.

Slave, thou shalt not purchase thy freedom with the bondage of thy friends and next-of-kin; nor shalt thou seek to obtain it, if that freedom be at the price of making the slavery of thy enemy more sorrowful.

Learn to discern light from darkness, and to perceive in the darkest night the bright dawn of the coming day.

Better that thou shouldst be twice deceived, and cursed thrice by LIE for no lie of thine, but thy truthful word, rather than deceive thy enemy even once, or so much as think of cursing thy greatest foe.

He who curses, poisons his own heart, losing thereby every spark of love in him.

Hate is the black skunk, and love, the pure, snow-white ermine: it is enough to let in one skunk to clear a whole plain of the ermines—aye, to the last.

## KEEPING THE DIVINE IN VIEW

As is said in the *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* : " While taking medicine one should think of Vishnu or the all-pervading ; while eating, of Janârdana, the All-Giver ; while lying down, of Padmanabha ; while marrying, of Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures ; while fighting, of Chakradhara ; while travelling in a foreign land, of Trivikrama ; at the time of death, of Narayana ; at the time of reunion with friends, of Sridhara ; after dreaming bad dreams, of Govinda ; at the time of danger, of Madhusudana ; in the midst of a forest, of Narsingha ; in the midst of fire, of Jalasai, or the one lying on the water ; in the midst of water, of Varaha ; on the mountain, of Raghunundana ; while going, of Vaurana ; and in all acts, of Madhava."

Theosophy is for us the magnet which helps to draw knowledge and vision from all sides. It reveals the harmony of the visible universe and the invisible moral order of which it is a reflection.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* tells us :—

There is a Spirit that is mind and life, light and truth and vast spaces. He contains all works and desires and all perfumes and all tastes. He enfolds the whole universe, and in silence is loving to all.

Whatever we do, whatever we read, whatever we see, hear, touch, smell, taste, do not remain fragments ; under the influence of Theosophy they form a mosaic, a vast and intricate design, opening our understanding of many of the questions latent in our minds and hearts.

In cooking a meal, we have not only the golden grains and green vegetables, with their properties, to contemplate, but the elements of fire and water, the concrete symbols of Spirit and Matter and carriers of invisible forces. One step more and we find ourselves face to face with the abstractions of the metaphysical universe.

With our heart perception, we penetrate the domain of the occult and perceive how we can shed an influence through our hands, skilled instruments of work, and our eyes, watchful guardians, both dispensers of magnetism. Will that magnetism benefit those whom we intend to feed ? The watching of our thoughts, the purification of our feelings, a higher goal of service through cooking, come to the fore. Ideation on the transcendental virtues seems necessary, and attention focussed on the fulfilment of a task which reveals itself as sacred beyond words. It discloses its place in the universal web of harmonious interdependence which shines through every sentient point.

Think of eating : before our mind's eye passes the function of the marvellous machine that is the human instrument, so mathematically and intelligently destined to fill its tasks and responsibilities. We think of the little lives with gratitude and love, while offering the food they need, not only to get

stronger but to become finer, more responsive to the soul's touch. Both from the mineral kingdom, which is Light crystallised, and from the vegetable kingdom, which derives its sustenance from it as also from the radiating light, we can draw the energies necessary for the living body's perfect work. And again, the animal kingdom brings in the help of its strength and labour. But—these millions of lives composing a single human body are also dependent on the human kingdom. Think of the hands and efforts of the many men and women synthesised in a single loaf of bread !

The magic carpet of Nature reveals its profound meanings and possibilities. Everything becomes an avenue for a further and greater vista.

Walk out in the garden : we see the hand of the Divine Host in the shape of a leaf, in the colour of a flower, in the movement of an insect, in the song of a bird—each a patient primordial work of art, drawn of the stuff of the great Akashic Store, directed by love eternal, moulded by sacrifice.

At sunrise, at sunset, at every hour of day and night are unveiled before us the forces of the Great Nature of which the *Stanzas of Dzyan* sing in a grandiose epic. The Dawn and the Twilight are Pillars of Light, standing at the four corners of the Universe.

On and on we can go, and we ever shall meet the Living Message and Its Inspiration. Contacts on all planes bring more of these enlightening pieces of the Infinite Puzzle. Theosophy is the Philosopher's Stone which helps us to transmute all passing things into the pure gold of Immortal Reality.

We may not become the flame, but we may sense its warmth, and by its light clear the way in us, around us. Participating more intimately in turning the Fiery Wheel of Life, we shall touch one day the fane of Agni which is the " Spirit of light above form, never-born, within all, outside all, in radiance above life and mind, and beyond this creation's Creator."

## THE LAST SONG OF THE SWAN

[The following article first appeared in *Lucifer* Vol. V, p. 445, for February 1890. The subheadings are our own.—EDS.]

"I see before my race an age or so,  
And I am sent to show a path among the thorns,  
To take them in my flesh.  
Well, I shall lay my bones  
In some sharp crevice of the broken way ;  
Men shall in better times stand where I fell,  
And singing, journey on in perfect bands  
Where I had trod alone. . . ."

THEODORE PARKER.

### A SYMBOL

Whence the poetical but very fantastic notion—even in a myth—about swans singing their own funeral dirges? There is a Northern legend to that effect, but it is not older than the middle ages. Most of us have studied ornithology; and in our own days of youth we have made ample acquaintance with swans of every description. In those trustful years of everlasting sunlight, there existed a mysterious attraction between our mischievous hand and the snowy feathers of the stubby tail of that graceful but harsh-voiced King of aquatic birds. The hand that offered treacherously biscuits, while the other pulled out a feather or two, was often punished; but so were the ears. Few noises can compare in cacophony with the cry of that bird—whether it be the "whistling" (*Cignus Americanus*) or the "trumpeter" swan. Swans snort, rattle, screech and hiss, but certainly they do not sing, especially when smarting under the indignity of an unjust assault upon their tails. But listen to the legend. "When feeling life departing, the swan lifts high its head, and breaking into a long, melodious chant—a heart-rending song of death—the noble bird sends heavenward a melodious protest, a plaint that moves to tears man and beast, and thrills through the hearts of those who hear it."

Just so, "those who hear it". But who ever heard that song sung by a swan? We do not hesitate to proclaim the acceptance of such a statement, even as a poetical license, one of the numerous paradoxes of our incongruous age and human mind. We have no serious objection to offer—owing to personal feelings—to Fénelon, the Archbishop and orator, being dubbed the "Swan of Cambrai", but we protest against the same dubious compliment being applied to Shakespeare. Ben Jonson was ill-advised to call the greatest genius England can boast of—the "sweet swan of Avon"; and as to Homer being nicknamed "the Swan of Meander"—this is simply a posthumous libel, which *Lucifer* can never disapprove of and expose in sufficiently strong terms.

Let us apply the fictitious idea rather to things than to men, by remembering that the swan—a symbol of the Supreme Brahm and one of the *avatars* of the amorous Jupiter—was also a symbolical type of cycles; at any rate of the tail-end of every important cycle in human history. An emblem as strange, the reader may think, and one as difficult to account for. Yet it has its *raison d'être*. It was probably suggested by the swan loving to swim in circles, bending its long and graceful neck into a ring, and it was not a bad typical designation, after all. At any rate the older idea was more graphic and to the point, and certainly more logical, than the later one which endowed the swan's throat with musical modulations and made of him a sweet songster, and a seer to boot.

The last song of the present "Cyclic Swan" bodes us an evil omen. Some hear it screeching like an owl, and croaking like Edgar Poe's raven. The combination of the figures 8 and 9, spoken of in last month's editorial, has borne its fruits already. Hardly had we spoken of the dread the Cæsars and World-Potentates of old had for number 8, which postulates the *equality of all men*, and of its fatal combination with number 9—which represents the earth *under an evil principle*—when that principle began making sad havoc among the poor Potentates and the Upper Ten—their subjects. The Influenza has shown of late a weird and mysterious predilection for Royalty. One by one it has levelled its members through death to an absolute equality with their grooms and kitchen-maids. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* Its first victim was the Empress Dowager of Germany; then the ex-Empress of Brazil, the Duke d'Aosta, Prince William of Hesse Philippstal, the Duke of Montpensier, the Prince of Swarzburg Rudolstadt, and the wife of the Duke of Cambridge; besides a number of Generals, Ambassadors, Statesmen, and their mothers-in-law. Where, when, at what victim shalt thou stop thy scythe, O "innocent" and "harmless" Influenza?

## INFLUENZA

Each of these royal and semi-royal Swans has sung his last song, and gone "to that bourne" whence every "traveller returns",—the aphoristical verse to the contrary, notwithstanding. Yea, they will now solve the great mystery for themselves, and Theosophy and its teaching will get more adherents and believers among royalty in "heaven", than it does among the said caste on earth.

*Apropos* of Influenza—miscalled the "Russian", but which seems to be rather the scape-goat, while it lasts, for the sins of omission and commission of the medical faculty and its fashionable physicians—what is it? Medical authorities have now and then ventured a few words sounding very learned, but telling us very little about its true nature. They seem to have picked up now and then a clue of pathological thread pointing rather vaguely, if at all, to its being due to bacteriological causes; but they are as far off a solution of the mystery as ever. The practical lessons resulting from so many and varied cases have been many, but the deductions therefrom do not seem to have been numerous or satisfactory.

What is in reality that unknown monster, which seems to travel with the rapidity of some sensational news started with the object of dishonouring a fellow creature; which is almost ubiquitous; and which shows such strange discrimination in the selection of its victims? Why does it attack the rich and the powerful far more in proportion than it does the poor and the insignificant? Is it indeed only "an agile microbe" as Dr. Symes Thomson would make us think? And is it quite true that the *influential* Bacillus (no pun meant) has just been apprehended at Vienna by Drs. Jolles and Weichselbaum—or is it but a snare and a delusion like so many other things? Who knoweth? Still the face of our unwelcome guest—the so-called "Russian Influenza" is veiled to this day, though its body is heavy to many, especially to the old and the weak, and almost invariably fatal to invalids. A great medical authority on epidemics, Dr. Zedekauer, has just asserted that that disease has ever been the precursor of cholera—at St. Petersburg, at any rate. This is, to say the least, a very strange statement. That which is now called "influenza", was known before as the *grippe*, and the latter was known in Europe as an epidemic, centuries before the cholera made its first appearance in so-called civilized lands. The biography and history of Influenza, *alias* "grippe", may prove interesting to some readers. This is what we gather from authoritative sources.

The earliest visit of it, as recorded by medical science, was to Malta, in 1510. In 1577 the young

influenza grew into a terrible epidemic, which travelled from Asia to Europe to disappear in America. In 1580 a new epidemic of *grippe* visited Europe, Asia and America, killing *the old people, the weak and the invalids*. At Madrid the mortality was enormous, and in Rome alone 9,000 persons died of it. In 1590 the influenza appeared in Germany; thence passed, in 1593, into France and Italy. In 1658-1663 it visited Italy only; in 1669, Holland; in 1675, Germany and England; and in 1691, Germany and Hungary. In 1729 all Europe suffered most terribly from the "innocent" visitor. In London alone 908 men died from it the first week; upwards of 60,000 persons suffering from it, and 30 per cent. dying from catarrh or influenza at Vienna. In 1732 and 1733, a new epidemic of the *grippe* appeared in Europe, Asia and America. It was almost as universal in the years 1737 and 1743, when London lost by death from it, during one week, over 1,000 men. In 1762, it raged in the British army in Germany. In 1775 an almost countless number of cattle and domestic animals were killed by it. In 1782, 40,000 persons were taken ill *on one day*, at St. Petersburg. In 1830, the influenza made a successful journey round the world—that only time—as *the first pioneer* of cholera. It returned again from 1833 to 1837. In the year 1847, it killed more men in London than the cholera itself had done. It assumed an epidemic character once more in France, in 1858.

We learn from the St. Petersburg *Novoyé Vremya* that Dr. Hirsh shows from 1510 to 1850 over 300 great epidemics of *grippe* or *influenza*, both general and local, severe and weak. According to the above-given data, therefore, the influenza having been this year very weak at St. Petersburg, can hardly be called "Russian". That which is known of its characteristics shows it, on the contrary, as of a most impartially cosmopolitan nature. The extraordinary rapidity with which it acts, secured for it in Vienna the name of *Blitz catarrhe*. It has nothing in common with the ordinary *grippe*, so easily caught in cold and damp weather; and it seems to produce no special disease that could be localized, but only to act most fatally on the nervous system and especially on the lungs. Most of the deaths from influenza occur in consequence of lung-paralysis.

All this is very significant. A disease which is epidemic, yet not contagious; which acts everywhere, in clean as in unclean places, in sanitary as well as in unsanitary localities, hence needing very evidently no centres of contagion to start from; an epidemic which spreads at once like an air-current, embracing whole countries and parts of the world;

striking at the same time the mariner, in the midst of the ocean, and the royal scion in his palace; the starving wretch of the world's Whitechapels, sunk in and soaked through with filth, and the aristocrat in his high mountain *sanitarium*, like Davos in Engadin,<sup>1</sup> where no lack of sanitary arrangements can be taken to task for it—such a disease can bear no comparison with epidemics of the ordinary, common type, e.g., such as the cholera. Nor can it be regarded as caused by parasites or microscopical microbes of one or the other kind. To prove the fallacy of this idea in her case, the dear old influenza attacked most savagely Pasteur, the “microbe-killer”, himself, and his host of assistants. Does it not seem, therefore, as if the causes that produced influenza were rather cosmical than bacterial; and that they ought to be searched for rather in those abnormal changes in our atmosphere that have well nigh thrown into confusion and shuffled seasons all over the globe for the last few years—than in anything else?

It is not asserted for the first time now that all such mysterious epidemics as the present influenza are due to an abnormal exuberance of ozone in the air. Several physicians and chemists of note have so far agreed with the occultists, as to admit that the tasteless, colourless and inodorous gas known as oxygen—“the life supporter” of all that lives and breathes—does get at times into family difficulties with its colleagues and brothers, when it tries to get over their heads in volume and weight and becomes heavier than is its wont. In short—oxygen becomes ozone. That would account probably for the preliminary symptoms of influenza. Descending, and spreading on earth with an extraordinary rapidity, oxygen would, of course, produce a still greater combustion: hence the terrible heat in the patient's body and the paralysis of rather weak lungs. What says Science with respect to ozone: “It is the exuberance of the latter under the powerful stimulus of electricity in the air, that produces in nervous people that unaccountable feeling of fear and depression which they so often experience before a storm.” Again: “the quantity of ozone in the atmosphere varies with the meteorological condition *under laws so far unknown to science.*” A certain amount of ozone is necessary, they wisely say, for breathing purposes, and the circulation of the blood. On the other hand “too much of ozone irritates the respiratory organs, and an excess of more than 1% of it in the air kills

him who breathes it.” This is proceeding on rather occult lines. “The real ozone is the Elixir of Life”, says *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I. p. 144, 2nd footnote. Let the reader compare the above with what he will find stated in the same work about oxygen viewed from the hermetic and occult standpoint (*Vide pp. 113 and 114, Vol. II.*) and he may comprehend the better what some Theosophists think of the present influenza.

It thus follows that the mystically inclined correspondent who wrote in *Novoyé Vremya* (No. 4931, Nov. 19th, old style, 1889) giving sound advice on the subject of the influenza, then just appeared—knew what he was talking about. Summarizing the idea, he stated as follows:—

...“It becomes thus evident that the real causes of this simultaneous spread of the epidemic all over the Empire under the most varied meteorological conditions and climatic changes—are to be sought elsewhere than in the unsatisfactory hygienical and sanitary conditions... The search for the causes which generated the disease and caused it to spread is not incumbent upon the physicians alone, but *would be the right duty of meteorologists, astronomers, physicists, and naturalists in general*, separated officially and substantially from medical men.”

This raised a professional storm. The modest suggestion was tabooed and derided; and once more an Asiatic country—China, this time—was sacrificed as a scapegoat to the sin of FOHAT and his too active progeny. When royalty and the rulers of this sublunary sphere have been sufficiently decimated by influenza and other kindred and unknown evils, perhaps the turn of the Didymi of Science may come. This will be only a just punishment for their despising the “occult” sciences, and sacrificing truth to personal prejudices.

Meanwhile, the last death song of the cyclic Swan has commenced; only few are they who heed it, as the majority has ears merely not to hear, and eyes—to remain blind. Those who do, however, find the cyclic song sad, very sad, and far from melodious. They assert that besides influenza and other evils, half of the civilized world's population is threatened with violent death, this time thanks to the conceit of the men of *exact* Science, and the all grasping selfishness of speculation. This is what the new craze of “electric lighting” promises every large city before the dying cycle becomes a corpse. These are facts, and not any “crazy speculations of ignorant Theosophists”. Of late Reuter sends almost daily such agreeable warnings as this on electric wires in general, and electric wires in America—especially:

<sup>1</sup> “Colonel the Hon. George Napier will be prevented from attending the funeral of his father, Lord Napier of Magdala, by a severe attack of influenza at Davos, Switzerland.”—*The Morning Post* of January 21, 1890.

Another fatal accident, arising from the system of overhead electric lighting wires, is reported to-day from Newburgh, New York State. It appears that a horse while being driven along touched an iron awning-post with his nose, and fell down as if dead. A man, who rushed to assist in raising the animal, touched the horse's head-stall and immediately dropped dead, and another man who attempted to lift the first, received a terrible shock. The cause of the accident seems to have been that an electric wire had become slack and was lying upon an iron rod extending from the awning-post to a building, and that the full force of the current was passing down the post into the ground. The insulating material of the wire had become thoroughly saturated with rain. (*Morning Post*, Jan. 21.)

This is a cheerful prospect, and looks indeed as if it were one of the "last songs of the Swan" of practical civilization. But,

### A SPIRITUAL MYSTERY

There is balm in Gilead—even at this eleventh hour of our jaw-breaking and truth-kicking century. Fearless clergymen summon up courage and dare to express publicly their actual feelings, with thorough contempt for "the utter humbug of the cheap 'religious talk' which obtains in the present day".<sup>1</sup> They are daily mustering new forces; and hitherto rabidly conservative daily papers fear not to allow their correspondents, when occasion requires, to fly into the venerable faces of *Cant*, and Mrs. Grundy. It is true that the subject which brought out the wholesome though unwelcome truth, in the *Morning Post*, was worthy of such an exception. A correspondent, Mr. W. M. Hardinge, speaking of Sister Rose Gertrude, who has just sailed for the Leper Island of Molokai suggests that—"a portrait of this young lady should somehow be added to one of our national galleries" and adds:—

#### FATHER DAMIEN AND SISTER ROSE GERTRUDE

"Mr. Edward Clifford would surely be the fitting artist. I, for one, would willingly contribute to the permanent recording, by some adequate painter, of whatever manner of face it may be that shines so saintly a soul. Such a subject—too rare, alas, in England—should be more fruitful than precept."<sup>2</sup>

Amen. Of precepts and tall talk in fashionable churches people have more than they bargain for; but of really practical Christ-like work in daily life—except when it leads to the laudation and mention of names of the would-be philanthropists in public papers—we see *nil*. Moreover, such a subject as the voluntary Calvary chosen by Sister Rose Gertrude is "too rare" indeed, anywhere, without speaking

of England. The young heroine, like her noble predecessor, Father Damien,<sup>3</sup> is a true Theosophist in daily life and practice—the latter the greatest ideal of every genuine follower of the Wisdom-religion. Before such work, of practical Theosophy, religion and dogma, theological and scholastic differences, nay even esoteric knowledge itself are but secondary accessories, accidental details. All these must give precedence to and disappear before Altruism (real Buddha and Christ-like altruism, of course, not the theoretical twaddle of Positivists) as the flickering tongues of gas-light in street lamps pale and vanish before the rising sun. Sister Rose Gertrude is not only a great and saintly heroine, but also a spiritual mystery; an EGO not to be fathomed on merely intellectual or even psychic lines. Very true, we hear of whole nunneries having volunteered for the same work at Molokai, and we readily believe it, though this statement is made more for the glorification of Rome than for Christ and His work. But, even if true, the offer is no parallel. We have known nuns who were ready to walk across a prairie on fire to escape convent life. One of them confessed in an agony of despair that death was sweet and even the prospect of *physical tortures* in hell was preferable to life in a convent and its *moral tortures*. To such, the prospect of buying a few years of freedom and fresh air at the price of dying from leprosy is hardly a sacrifice but a choice of the lesser of two evils. But the case of Sister Rose Gertrude is quite different. She gave up a life of personal freedom, a quiet home and loving family, all that is dear and near to a young girl, to perform unostentatiously a work of the greatest heroism, a most ungrateful task, by which she cannot even save from death and suffering her fellow men, but only soothe and alleviate their moral and physical tortures. She sought no notoriety and shrank from the admiration or even the help of the public. She simply did the bidding of *her MASTER*—to the very letter. She prepared to go unknown and unrewarded in this life to an almost certain death, preceded by years of incessant physical torture from the most loathsome of all diseases. And she did it, not as the Scribes and Pharisees who perform their prescribed duties in the open streets and public Synagogues, but verily as the Master had commanded: alone, in the secluded closet of her inner life and face to face only with "her Father in secret", trying to conceal the grandest and noblest of all human acts, as another tries to hide a crime.

Therefore, we are right in saying that—in this our century at all events—Sister Rose Gertrude is, as was Father Damien before her—a *spiritual mys-*

<sup>1</sup> Revd. Hugh B. Chapman, Vicar St. Luke's, Cambridge, in *Morning Post*, January 21st.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Key to Theosophy", p. 239, what Theosophists think of Father Damien; [Bombay Ed., p. 200.—Eds.]

tery. She is the rare manifestation of a "Higher Ego", free from the trammels of all the elements of its Lower one; influenced by these elements only so far as the errors of her terrestrial sense-perceptions—with regard to religious form—seem to bear a true witness to that which is still human in her Personality—namely, her reasoning powers. Thence the ceaseless and untiring self-sacrifice of such natures to what appears *religious* duty, but which in sober truth is the very essence and *esse* of the dormant Individuality—"divine compassion", which is "no attribute" but verily "the law of laws, eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF."<sup>1</sup> It is this compassion, crystallized in our very being, that whispers night and day to such as Father Damien and Sister Rose Gertrude—"Can there be bliss when there are men who suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the others cry?" Yet, "Personality"—having been blinded by training and religious education to the real presence and nature of the HIGHER SELF—recognizes not its voice, but confusing it in its helpless ignorance with the external and extraneous Form, which it was taught to regard as a divine Reality—it sends heavenward and outside instead of addressing them inwardly, thoughts and prayers, the realization of which is in its SELF. It says in the beautiful words of Dante Rossetti, but with a higher application :

....."For lo! thy law is passed  
That this my love should manifest be  
To serve and honour thee;  
And so I do; and my delight is full,  
Accepted by the servant of thy rule."

How came this blindness to take such deep root in human nature? Eastern philosophy answers us by pronouncing two deeply significant words among so many others misunderstood by our present generation—*Maya* and *Avidya*, or "illusion" and that which is rather the opposite of, or the absence of knowledge, in the sense of esoteric science, and not "ignorance" as generally translated.

To the majority of our casual critics the whole of the aforesaid will appear, no doubt, as certain of Mrs. Partington's learned words and speeches. Those who believe that they have every mystery of nature at their fingers' ends, as well as those who maintain that official science alone is entitled to solve for humanity the problems which are hidden far away in the complex constitution of man—will never understand us. And, unable to realize our true meaning, they may, raising themselves on the pattens of modern negation, endeavour, as they always have, to push away with their scientific mops

the waters of the great ocean of occult knowledge. But the waves of *Gupta Vidya* have not reached these shores to form no better than a slop and puddle, and serious contest with them will prove as unequal as Dame Partington's struggle with the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Well, it matters little anyhow, since thousands of Theosophists will easily understand us. After all, the earth-bound watchdog, chained to matter by prejudice and preconception, may bark and howl at the bird taking its flight beyond the heavy terrestrial fog—but it can never stop its soaring, nor can our inner perceptions be prevented by our official and limited five senses from searching for, discovering, and often solving, problems hidden far beyond the reach of the latter—hence, beyond also the powers of discrimination of those who deny a sixth and seventh sense in man.

The earnest Occultist and Theosophist, however, sees and recognizes psychic and spiritual mysteries and profound secrets of nature in every flying particle of dust, as much as in the giant manifestations of human nature. For him there exist proofs of the existence of a universal Spirit-Soul everywhere, and the tiny nest of the colibri offers as many problems as Brahma's golden egg. Yea, he recognises all this, and bowing with profound reverence before the mystery of his own inner shrine, he repeats with Victor Hugo :

"Le nid que l'oiseau bâtit  
Si petit  
Est une chose profonde.  
L'œuf, oté de la forêt  
Manquerait  
A l'équilibre du monde."

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## MYTHS AND LEGENDS

H. P. B. declares repeatedly that "no mythological story, no traditional event in the folk-lore of a people has ever been, at any time, pure fiction". A small book<sup>2</sup> recently published by a member of the Gebhard family of Elberfeld, who were closely associated with H. P. B. in the eighties of last century, develops and illustrates this idea in reference to certain legends of Celto-Germanic origin.

He pays tribute to H. P. B. by name as one "for whom I have a profound admiration and reverence, totally unaffected by any apparent difference

<sup>1</sup> See "Voice of the Silence," pp. 69 and 71; [Bombay Ed., pp. 76 and 78.—EDS.]

<sup>2</sup> *The Tradition of Silence in Myth and Legend.* By A. H. GEBHARD-L'ESTRANGE. (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London. 6s.)

of opinion". And there can be no doubt that he refers to her also when he writes elsewhere in the same volume :—

If one reads the Edda or the Mabinogion or Irish folklore, it becomes plain that two thousand and more years ago initiates knew the laws which govern magic. Of course the enlightened moderns smile if they hear of such a thing as magic. Personally I can vouch for having more than once been witness to miraculous occult happenings. In the eighties and nineties of last century I received explanations of these happenings from the producer of the phenomena, but did not accept them because they were contrary to the then reigning conceptions of matter. Forty years later, when the "...ons" [protons, electrons, neutrons etc.] had been discovered, I was able to satisfy myself that the explanations had been correct.

H. P. B. recognized that science was "slowly but as surely approaching our domains of the Occult", but it is a curious illustration of the natural perversity of the human lower mind to demand the sanction of modern empiricism before accepting the teachings accumulated, tested and verified by the true scientists, the occultists, during thousands of years. The modern empiricist scientists have convinced him that what we call matter is non-existent. He now holds that, far from thought being the product of matter, as some nineteenth-century scientists believed, matter is produced by thoughts, by "phantasmising", and that Magic is "the art of making use of phantasmising at will".

The author assigns a higher place to ancient myths, sagas and legends than to historical research, partly on the ground that only what is experienced is of lasting worth and that a parable is like an experience of the soul. He goes too far, however, when he asserts that "only the myths which represent the fall of a God, his state of bondage and his Liberation, relate to eternal Truth." Caesar, just before the Christian era, testified that the Druids believed in transmigration. But we know from H.P.B. that the Druids were connected, in their esoteric teachings, with the universal Wisdom Religion and that their teachings embraced "the physical as well as the spiritual sciences", above all the immortality of the soul "but also the secrets of the universe, the harmonious progress of the heavenly bodies, the formation of the earth".

Mr. Gebhard's analysis of some of the legends is very interesting, e.g., those of Finn, the Fair One, of Oisín and Niam, of the Holy Grail, of Lohengrin, of Tristan and Iseult and of Siegfried and Brunnhilde. H. P. B., however, has written :—

Without the help of symbology (with its seven departments, of which the moderns know nothing) no ancient Scripture can ever be correctly understood. Symbology must be studied from every one of its aspects, for each nation had its own peculiar methods of expression.

We have been given, in the portion of the Secret Doctrine made public for our age, the partial interpretation of some of the ancient myths and legends, such as those of Prometheus, of the War in Heaven etc. The Key held by Occult Science fits them all, but the meaning underlying myths not touched upon by H. P. B. or interpreted specifically by any of her great predecessors must be a matter of speculation for the uninitiated. The chief value of the book for the seeker, therefore, lies in its reflections on spiritual rebirth and on the relationship between Guru and chela.

Spiritual rebirth, the author assures us, is impossible unless a man realizes and accepts his own nothingness—that he as personality is illusory because transitory, that he is only "the reflex of the true individuality of a God", "the tool of which the Individual God-Soul makes use in its striving for Liberation". As Eckhart puts it, "In that degree to which thou leavest thyself, God enters into thee."

He stresses that a guide is indispensable to all but such high souls as have attained in a previous incarnation to a realisation of the Way, but that no choice can be more serious than that of a Teacher. If, however,

a seeker is completely sincere, he is bound to come to a true guide, for they will be drawn together by the natural laws of attraction greatly increased in potency because the forces are working on a higher plane.

This recalls the Master's beautiful and gracious assurance :—

I can come nearer to you, but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the adept follows his attractions.

The point is stressed that in accepting a true Guru the chela does not surrender his freedom. The Guru differs from the superior in any sphere of ordinary life, in that. He will give advice only and not command. It may sound paradoxical that nevertheless the relation of Guru and chela depends upon the chela's strict obedience but it is not so because

a pupil may follow or not, as he thinks right, only he must know that any disobedience, or behaviour other than submissive, will put him automatically outside the sphere of his guide. It is not a case of the pupil being turned away by the guide for disobedience to a command; it is the pupil's own state of mind and heart which leads him away from the Path, and if he realizes that he was wrong, he can return again to the guidance of his Master, who would refuse him only if his realisation were incomplete or insincere... the proper behaviour of a pupil is a matter of heart, and... where there is love and reverence there will always be the right attitude.

This is altogether a valuable and stimulating book.



## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The spirit of the English naturalist, story-teller and poet, W. H. Hudson, is the subject of an evaluation in *The Quarterly Review* for October 1940 by Robert Hamilton. He declares that Hudson's "instinctive *hylozoism*—his feeling that nature was alive and full of the impersonal mystery of her multitudinous being", his "feeling for nature as a 'person'", inspired most of his beautiful passages. He saw man as part of nature but as its keystone, "the all-important part, since he is the mirror of her beauty".

Early in his life... he became ill with a peculiar form of heart trouble, and for a time his life was despaired of: when at length he recovered, a profoundly introspective feeling for nature, already germinal, had developed. The wild, free life of nature became symbolical of life itself—the *hylozoistic* identification of matter and spirit.

The warring in his consciousness of this reverence for the Divine as manifested in nature with a materialism perhaps induced by his reluctant acquiescence in the Darwinian hypothesis comes out poignantly in his writings, in

the profound pessimism (grief is perhaps a better word) which overcame him when the conflict between the idealistic and material sides of his nature resulted in the victory of the latter, like the sudden descent of a tropical night. Then his grief broke in a cry for all the beauty that is vanished and returneth not.

A universally diffused, omnipresent, eternal Deity in Nature is, of course, a fundamental concept of Theosophy and it will be remembered that H. P. B. referred to Hylozoism as the highest aspect of Pantheism.

Our DEITY is neither in a paradise, nor in a particular tree, building, or mountain; it is everywhere, in every atom of the visible as of the invisible Cosmos, in, over, and around every invisible atom and divisible molecule; for IT is the mysterious power of evolution and involution, the omnipresent, omnipotent, and even omniscient creative potentiality.

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"Free thinking is good, but right thinking is better."

This maxim, attributed to the Swedish mystic philosopher Swedenborg, formed the text for Prof. M. N. Saha's lecture on "Right Thinking", given at Calcutta on November 16th and printed in *Science and Culture* for December 1940. He held up to ridicule, in the light of modern folly, the supercilious

early-twentieth-century condemnation of the "irrationality" of the ancient nations, who regarded the gods of their neighbours as devils and themselves as the chosen people.

The gods of ancient times have, at the present time, given place to creeds of various designation—Nationalism, Imperialism, Socialism, Marxism, Fascism and Nazism—and wars are being fought over these rival creeds with as much ferocity and ruthlessness as between any two barbaric nations of the past!

Professor Saha's lecture was in substance a plea for the open mind and for the objective consideration—possible only to such a mind—of subjects vital to society's well-being and progress. He believes present-day political leaders "to a great extent psychologically unfit to approach the problems in such an objective way". It should be possible to discuss any problem in a spirit as free from preconceptions as that in which the true scientist approaches Nature. What prevents is largely the emphasis on "right thinking" in the wrong sense, *i.e.*, in that not of attitude but of content, of orthodoxy, political, economic, social, religious or what not.

Students of Theosophy have to be on their guard against falling into the same mistake. A healthy divergence of views is good. "Adverse opinions", H. P. B. declares, "are like conflicting winds which brush from the quiet surface of a lake the green scum that tends to settle upon still waters." Defining "Mârga" in *The Theosophical Glossary*, she writes:—

The eight-fold path has grown out of the seven-fold path, by the addition of the (now) first of the eight Marga; *i.e.*, "the possession of orthodox views"; with which a *real* Yogâcharya would have nothing to do.

If students are not careful they will yield to the common human tendency and will crystallise into hard and fast dogmas their partial understanding of the fragment of the Universal Theosophy that has been given to this age. "Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable." The Theosophical Movement of our day was started on the broadest and freest of bases. It is for us to insure by our own attitude that it shall not, in the words of H. P. B., "degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an ever growing Knowledge". "Right thinking" is free thinking.

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What was perhaps the earliest formal attempt made in the West to investigate psychical phenomena scientifically is described by Professor H. H. Price of Oxford University in his article on "Some Philosophical Questions about Telepathy and Clairvoyance" in *Philosophy* for October. He writes:—

The founder of Psychical Research, though he has not yet received the honour due to him, seems to have been King Croesus of Lydia, who reigned from 560 to 546 B. C. He carried out an interesting experiment, recorded in detail by Herodotus, to test the clairvoyant powers of a number of oracles. He sent embassies to seven oracles, six Greek and one Egyptian. They all started on the same day. On the hundredth day each embassy was instructed to ask its oracle, "What is King Croesus, the son of Alyattes, now doing?" The answer was to be written down and brought back. The oracle of Delphi replied as follows, in hexameters, as its custom was: "I know the number of sands and the measures of the sea. I understand the dumb, and I hear him who does not speak." Then it went on: "There comes to my mind the smell of a strong-shelled tortoise, which is being cooked along with lamb's flesh in a brazen vessel; brass is spread beneath it, and with brass it is covered." As a matter of fact, this answer was perfectly correct. Herodotus tells us that "having considered what would be the most difficult thing to discover and to imagine", Croesus "cut up a tortoise and a lamb, and himself boiled them together in a brazen pot."

The utter unreliability of "spirit" communications is brought out by Herbert Thurston in an article published last year in *The Month*. He recalls the admission of W. H. Evans in the Spiritualist organ *Light*, shortly after hostilities began, that the unanimity of the controls had been such that one had felt that war would be impossible. "With a few exceptions we were assured that there would be no war." The Editor of *Light*, Mr. G. H. Letham, wrote in the same issue of his journal:—

During the past year, *Light* has published many messages, purporting to come from observers on the Other Side, in which assurances were given, more or less emphatic, that there would be "no European War", or that there would be "no Great War", or that there would be "no war for England"... As events have proved our hopes have been disappointed... But there is no reason to doubt the veracity, or even the existence of the various communicators from whom the peace messages purported to come.

Surely there are none so blind as those who will not see! Mr. Thurston concluded:—

During the past twenty years and more, I have spent, possibly wasted, a great deal of time in examining and comparing the messages which purport to emanate from the other world, but nothing has occurred to

alter or relieve my profound distrust of the information so obtained.

The accounts furnished of life in the spheres by such communicators as Raymond, Pheneas, Balou, Claude Bamber, and scores of others, contradict each other at every turn. It is rare enough to find them agreeing about any feature whatsoever.

There could be no stronger warning against putting faith in their guidance than the fact that the one time they seemed to be unanimous in the information they gave, their conclusions have proved to be definitely wrong.

How much longer will Spiritualists cling to the delusion that the deceptive messages which they receive through mediums are from the *spirits* of the dead?

Theosophical students are familiar with the teachings, to be found in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, p. 444 *et seq.*, that preparations for the formation of the sixth sub-race of our Fifth or Aryan Race are going forward in America, where already the forerunners of that new sub-race are being born. The teaching is that "Mankind will not grow again into giant bodies as in the case of the Lemurians and the Atlanteans" but even in the earliest sub-races of our Fifth Race man's height was 15 feet, changing in the third sub-race to 10 or 12; and the successive Races of mankind do differ from their predecessors in stature as well as in general physique and in mentality.

Interesting in the light of these facts is a note "Giants Ahead?", by R. H. O., which *The Journal of the Franklin Institute* (U.S.A.) for July reproduces from the Industrial Bulletin of Arthur D. Little, Inc., No. 156:—

One of the trends shaping the future of the still unstable American "race" is the tendency toward greater height with each succeeding generation. Examination of statistics that go back for about a hundred years reveals interesting information. A study of Harvard students whose ancestors had been in America for at least two generations indicates a gradual and regular increase of one inch per generation for four generations. Similar figures have been noted for girls, at Wellesley and other colleges. Jackson at Minnesota observed, "The younger college students represent a group precocious physically as well as mentally"... Granting that college students are taller than they used to be, the surprise is that the stretching up has been going on gradually for a century, and that it is not just happening now. Actually there appear to be some indications that the rate of increase has been slackening... The cause of the growth is apparently subtle and credit cannot fairly be assigned to any one factor. The large numbers of tall people that are appearing, no matter why, call for adjustments in architecture and furnishings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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