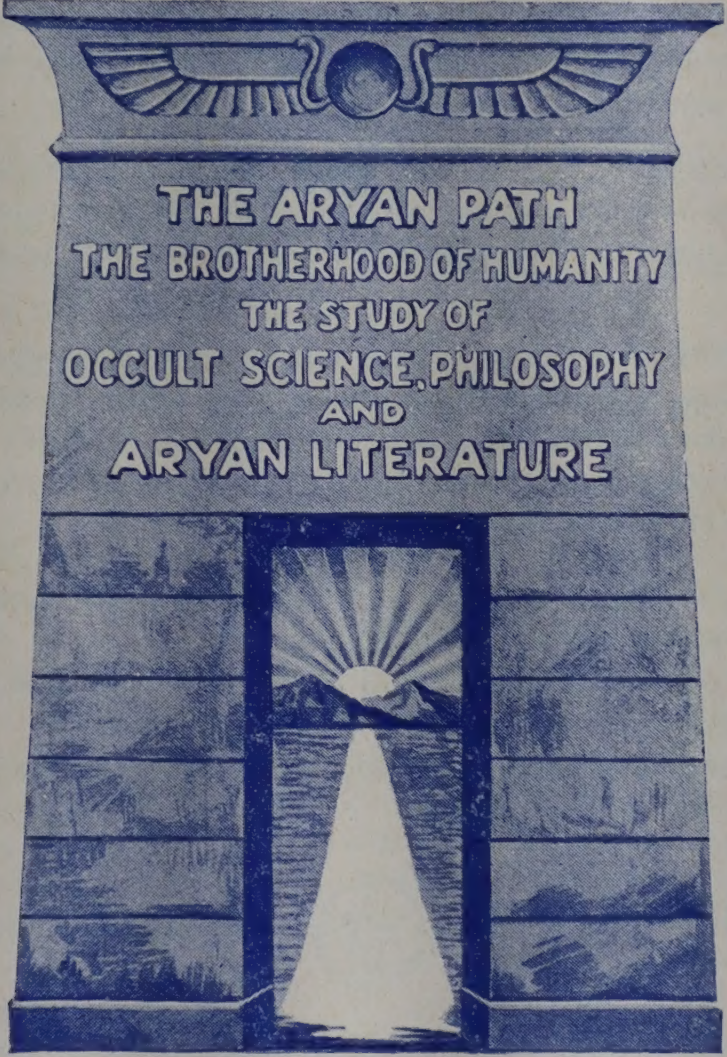




THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT
A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO



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

Vol. XIX No. 11

September 17, 1949

That which the clergy of every dogmatic religion—pre-eminently the Christian—points out as Satan, the enemy of God, is in reality, the highest divine Spirit—(occult Wisdom on Earth)—in its naturally antagonistic character to every worldly, evanescent illusion, dogmatic or ecclesiastical religions included.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study ; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः ।



There Is No Religion Higher Than Truth

BOMBAY, 17th September 1949.

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AUM

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

BOMBAY, 17th September 1949.

VOL. XIX. No. II

EQUANIMITY AND SKILL IN ACTION

What connection is there between equanimity of mind and skill in action, each of which the *Bhagavad-Gita* says is Yoga? Or, to take the opposite approach, between skill in action and that important and hard-to-obtain thing, equanimity of mind? It is axiomatic that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other and yet we see in everyday life that ordinary skill in action does not imply equal-mindedness, or ordinary equal-mindedness, skill in action! The excellent typist is not necessarily well-poised; neither is the person who is always placid necessarily skilful in action, though the absence of either equal-mindedness or skill in action does react upon the other.

To take a common example, if skill in action does not prevail, we make mistakes and get upset. Bad typing, forgetfulness in cooking or in keeping to arrangements made with others, due generally either to lack of attention or to the mind being immersed in feelings, leads to emotional upsets. And almost inevitably such upsets in turn lead to more mistakes.

We have, however, to get a different understanding of what the *Gita* means both by skill in action and by equanimity of mind. Since Yoga means union, skill in action in the *Gita* sense must mean that equanimity of mind which implies a co-ordination of mind—from the higher aspect as well as the lower—with the outer senses and organs, so that all actions will be performed with skill, through control, steady and continuous, by an equipoised mind.

How is this to be attained? It cannot be attained by "sitting for meditation" or by concentrating the mind on a pin-point for a certain length of time, but by control of the attention in

every action in life and at every hour of the day, so that the whole life is an orderly sequence of thought-feeling-action in one whole, approaching accuracy and tidiness of mental as also physical life.

To attain to this condition it is necessary to understand our natures: the relation of the senses and their outer organs with the feeling-desiring nature and with the mind. Therefore we have to start the work on ourselves by seeing the senses and organs as those means by which the mind and the desire nature contact the world of outer sights and sounds, and by means of which the impressions created in the memory affect our thinking-desiring nature. It is not enough, therefore, to "close the doors of the senses." After we have closed our eyes and cut ourselves off from sounds and from taste, smell and touch, we have to begin to cut off the memory of old sense impressions and the internal images in which the mind is caught. When these have ceased to affect the mind, however vaguely, then it is free to be affected by the Higher Mind or pure consciousness, which is always equipoised, always serene.

This moment of contact is hard to reach and, when reached, the contact is hard to maintain. Time and time again the effort must be made until success in holding it fast is the reward.

When that is attained, the connection of the Higher Mind with the mind functioning throughout the organism of man is also attained, because that mind, once its inherent nature is evoked, is of the same nature as the Higher Mind itself. When such mental action or awareness is established in the organs, they act as representatives of the Controller, not as themselves or in terms of their instinctive action for æons past. Hence all

action becomes steady, accurate, the product of steady thought, the reflection of perfect thinking or imagining.

But between the mind and the senses and organs is the astral body, in which circulate, all the time, desires and feelings. Having control of an emotion or of a desire may be merely controlling one desire by another, or a feeling by another

feeling. To control the feelings and desires through a higher type of thinking means to destroy their self-reproductive character. If there is no time to think on desires or to be upset by emotions, or to dwell on pleasant or unpleasant sense impressions and memories, then those things die at their birth and the equanimity of mind that we are seeking can the more quickly be attained.

SHALL WE TEACH CLAIRVOYANCE ?

A NOTE OF WARNING

[Reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. V, p. 282, December 1890.—EDS.]

My attention has been arrested by the address delivered in the Adyar course by Dr. Daly and reported in the September *Theosophist*. It is entitled "Clairvoyance."

Coming out in the Adyar course, it has a certain flavour of authority which will appeal to many members of the Society and may cause them to adopt the suggestions for practice given in the latter part of the address. Yet at the same time it is very true that the Theosophical Society is not responsible for the utterances of members in their private capacity.

The fact that clairvoyance is a power sought after by many persons cannot be disputed, but the questions, Is it well to try to develop clairvoyance? and, Shall we teach it? have not yet been definitely decided. Hence I may be permitted to give my views upon them.

At the outset I desire to declare my personal attitude on these questions and my beliefs as to facts. In using the term "clairvoyance" I intend to include in it all clear perception on that plane.

1. I have for many years been convinced by proofs furnished by others and from personal experience that clairvoyance is a power belonging to man's inner nature; and also that it is possessed by the animal kingdom.

2. This faculty is either inherited or educed by practice.

3. Those who have it by birth are generally physically diseased or nervously deranged. The cases where clairvoyance is shown by a perfectly healthy and well-balanced person are rare.

4. The records of spiritualism for over forty years in America conclusively prove that clairvoyance cannot be safely sought after by persons who have no competent guide; that its pursuit has done harm; and that almost every medium to whom one puts the question "Am I able to develop clairvoyance?" will reply "Yes."

5. There are no competent guides in this pursuit to be found here or in Europe who are willing to teach one how to acquire it without danger.

6. The qualifications such a guide should possess render the finding of one difficult if not impossible. They are: the power to look within and see clearly the whole inner nature of the student; a complete knowledge of all the planes upon which clairvoyance acts, including knowledge of the source, the meaning, and the effect of all that is perceived by the clairvoyant; and last, but not least, the power to stop at will the exercise of the power. Evidently these requirements call for an adept.

Who are the teachers of clairvoyance, and those who advise that it be practised? In the main, the first are mediums, and any investigator knows how little they know. Every one of them differs from every other in his powers. The majority have only one sort of clairvoyance; here and there are some who combine, at most, three classes of the faculty. Not a single one is able to mentally see behind the image or idea perceived, and cannot say in a given case whether the image seen is the object itself or the result of a thought

from another mind. For in these planes of perception the thoughts of men become as objective as material objects are to our human eyes. It is true that a clairvoyant can tell you that what is being thus perceived is not apprehended by the physical eye, but beyond that he cannot go. Of this I have had hundreds of examples. In 99 out of 100 instances the seer mistook the thought from another mind for a clairvoyant perception of a living person or physical object.

The seers of whom I speak see always according to their inner tendency, which is governed by subtle laws of heredity which are wholly unknown to scientific men and much more to mediums and seers. One will only reach the symbolic plane; another that which is known to occultists as the positive side of sound; another to the negative or positive aspects of the epidermis and its emanations; and so on through innumerable layer after layer of clairvoyance and octave after octave of vibrations. They all know but the little they have experienced, and for any other person to seek to develop the power is dangerous. The philosophy of it all, the laws that cause the image to appear and disappear, are *terra incognita*.

The occult septenary scheme in nature with all its modifications produces multiple effects, and no mere clairvoyant is able to see the truth that underlies the simplest instance of clairvoyant perception. If a man moves from one chair to another, immediately hundreds of possibilities arise for the clairvoyant eye, and he alone who is a highly trained and philosophical seer—an adept, in short—can combine them all so as to arrive at true clear-perception. In the simple act described almost all the centres of force in the moving being go into operation, and each one produces its own peculiar effect in the astral light. At once the motion made and thoughts aroused elicit their own sound, colour, motion in ether, amount of etheric light, symbolic picture, disturbance of elemental forces, and so on through the great catalogue. Did but one wink his eye, the same

effects follow in due order. And the seer can perceive but that which attunes itself to his own development and personal peculiarities, all limited in force and degree.

What, may I ask, do clairvoyants know of the law of prevention or encrustation which is acting always with many people? Nothing, absolutely nothing. How do they explain those cases where, try as they will, they cannot see anything whatever regarding certain things? Judging from human nature and the sordidness of many schools of clairvoyance, are we not safe in affirming that if there were any real or reliable clairvoyance about us nowadays among those who offer to teach it or take pay for it, long ago fortunes would have been made by them, banks despoiled, lost articles found, and friends more often reunited? Admitting that there have been sporadic instances of success on these lines, does not the exception prove that true clairvoyance is not understood or likely to be?

But what shall theosophists do? Stop all attempts at clairvoyance. And why? Because it leads them slowly but surely—almost beyond recall—into an interior and exterior passive state where the will is gradually overpowered and they are at last in the power of the demons who lurk around the threshold of our consciousness. Above all, follow no advice to “sit for development.” Madness lies that way. The feathery touches which come upon the skin while trying these experiments are said by mediums to be the gentle touches of “the spirits.” But they are not. They are caused by the ethereal fluids from within us making their way out through the skin and thus producing the illusion of a touch. When enough has gone out, then the victim is getting gradually negative, the future prey for spooks and will-o'-the-wisp images.

“But *what*,” they say, “shall we pursue and study?” Study the philosophy of life, leave the decorations that line the road of spiritual development for future lives, and—practise altruism.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

A GERMAN MYSTIC'S TEACHINGS

[This article is reprinted from *The Path*, Vol. III, pp. 224-226, for October 1888.—Eds.]

In the last three numbers of the *Path* we have given a story by the German Mystic Kernning of the experiences of a sensitive. The story is called advisedly "From Sensitive to Initiate." We did not think that it was intended to show what the final initiation is, but only one of the many initiations we have to undergo in our passage through matter. The trials of Catherine illustrate those we all have, whether we know them as such or not. She had a presence to annoy her; we, although not sensitive as she was, have within us influences and potential presences that affect us just as much; they cause us to have bias this way or that, to be at times clouded in our estimate of what is the true course or the true view to take, and, like her, so long as we do not recognize the cause of the clouds, we will be unable to dissipate them. But Kernning was a theosophist, and one of those men who knew the truth in theory and at the same time were able to make a practical application of what they knew. There are many cases today in which sensitive people do just what Caroline did and have "presences" to annoy them; but how many of our theosophists or spiritualists would be able to cast the supposed obsesser out, as Mohrland did in the story? They can be counted on one hand. The simplicity with which Kernning wrote should not blind us to the value of his work. In the preceding articles by him which we have from time to time given, there is much to be learned by those who look below the surface. We therefore add the following as a note to the last story in order to try to show its theosophic meaning.

The conversation about "Mantrams" between the Sage and the Student in the *Path* for August¹ involves an occult truth so important that it is worth while to recall that the power of mantrams is recognized by the school of German occultists represented by Kernning. Readers of the *Path* who have attentively read "Some Teachings of a German Mystic" have observed that in nearly all instances the pupils achieve an awaken-

ing of their inner self, or the "spiritual rebirth," by means of a particular word, a sentence, or perhaps even a letter of the alphabet, and that in cases where persons are involuntarily awakened, it is by continued thinking upon some object or person, as in the case of the young sailor whose mind was continually dwelling on his absent sweetheart and was thereby released from the limitations of his own personality. Caroline Ruppert was aroused by a morbid dwelling on her disappointment in love and by remorse for her conduct towards her invalid mother, until these thoughts gained a mantric power over her, and it required intelligent exercise with other mantrams, given her by the Adept Mohrland, to restore her self-control and give her a symmetrical development. Out of a medium, or mere sensitive, she thus became an initiate, able to control the psychic forces by her own will. Every hapless "medium" who is obsessed by elementals and elementaries that make life a torment, and who is compelled to do the bidding of these forces generated by personal vitality, and whose conflict obscures the true self—like a spring whose waters, finding no adequate channel, rise to the level of their source and thus drown it—, has it in his or her power, by intelligent exercise of the will, to obtain command over what they are now obliged to obey. But, in doing this, "right motive" must be kept constantly in view; care must be exercised to keep absolutely free from all mercenary or other selfish considerations, else one will become a black magician. The condition known as "mediumship" has been the subject of too much indiscriminate condemnation; it can be made a blessing as well as a curse, and the aim should be, not to suppress it, but to develop it in the right direction. The psychic powers, like all other natural forces, can be made either a good servant or a terrible master, and, in proportion to their subtlety as compared with other forces, so much greater is their power for good or for evil.

In psychic work the power of united endeavour has often been emphasized, and it is easy to see

¹ Reprinted in *Vernal Blooms*, p. 139.

that the power is developed whether consciously or unconsciously exercised. Thus, with thousands thinking unitedly in one direction, as in the present Theosophical awakening, they all help each other, lending strength to each other's will, whether they are aware of it or not. According to this principle it would seem that a word used commonly for mantric purposes has a greater potency over the forces of the spirit, owing to the impression it has made upon the *akasa*, than a word not commonly used, for in the case of the former the user has the aid of the wills of all others who have used it.

In one of his works, "*The Freemason*," Kernning gives a good explanation of the power of mantrams, in replying to the strictures of a rationalistic critic, who says that such a use of words is made by the bonzes (yogis) of India, and therefore must be wholly nonsensical! Says Kernning: "Whoever has a great love for an art or science not only finds delight in the results, but their very names have a sort of magic power with him. Whoever feels a love for another person is moved whenever he thinks of that person or repeats the name of that person. The gambler, in spite of all the arguments against his infatuation made by others, and often, indeed, by himself, always beholds dice and cards before his eyes. The drunkard only needs, in order to be made thirsty, to hear the name of wine. The miser lives in the vision of his ducats and dollars, the ambitious man upon the insignia of fame and the plaudits of the multitude, the courtier upon his orders and titles, and in all these cases, not only are the things themselves concerned, but the names have become idolized. Now suppose that one should, instead of swimming in the depths, fill spirit and soul with exalted and divine ideas and names, can other than most beneficent results follow? Indeed, could a person be a genuine Christian without the life of Christ, and even his name becoming animate in spirit and soul? Therefore there is no nonsensical or unreasonable practice in this; on the contrary, every one should be made aware of this simple method, which is founded upon human

nature and is confirmed by experience, that he may attain the means of ennobling his nature, of directing his energies towards the highest end of his life, and reaching this end with certainty."

GOD AS TORCHBEARER

Man's concept of Deity plays a significant part in his attitude to life. A man's real or inner religion is not of the Mosque or the Mandir but of the ideas he holds about the nature of God, of Soul, of the relation subsisting between them. Here is an idea in Lloyd Douglas's new novel, *The Big Fisherman*, which every student of Theosophy will do well to read for its picture of the important period in European history before and after the year 1 A.D.; it presents Jesus and Peter in a fine setting. In conjunction with his earlier novel, *The Robe*, this story provides material and images worth reflecting upon. Here is one such image of God as Torchbearer:—

"... Sometimes, however, I find myself privately worshipping a god whom I think of as the Torchbearer. He has been going about for ages. Up and down, across the world, in every era, in every country—patiently searching for men with lamps in their hands, larger lamps than those of their neighbours or their fathers. And this light-giving god touches the wicks of these unusually capacious lamps with his divine torch.

"My favourite god, the Torchbearer, wants the world to have more light, for men to see by—so he keeps on looking for lamps. It must be a very disappointing quest. I marvel at his perseverance. Only a few men—widely separated by leagues and centuries—have borne lamps worthy of the divine fire; and such light as they have kindled has brightened the way for a mere handful of adventurers. As for the multitudes, they still stumble along in the old darkness. Sometimes the Torchbearer lights a large lamp that attracts smaller lamps. Plato brings his lamp to Aristotle, and there is an unprecedented brightness on the path—for a few, for a while. For a little while."

The Theosophical philosophy describes the process of the lighting up of Manas which made humanity self-conscious. The awakening of Bud-dhi, the Pure and Compassionate Reason, is an important aspect of the process now in progress.

THE THEOSOPHY OF SHAKESPEARE'S "TEMPEST"

[Based upon a lecture delivered at the United Lodge of Theosophists, Bombay, on April 26th, 1949.—EDS.]

I

Our study is conceived merely as an essay in the interpretation of a subject at once Protean and profound. The more one delves into the genius of Shakespeare, the greater is the realization by every honest student of Theosophy that, as veil after veil is lifted, there will remain "veil upon veil behind."

Who was Shakespeare? What manner of man was he? What was the power behind his plays? Questions all more easily asked than answered, but suggestions of answers are to be found in hints scattered through the recorded writings of the latest teachers of Theosophy.

The vicissitudes of Shakespeare's reputation and the vagaries of critical opinion alike substantiate Madame Blavatsky's statement that Shakespeare, like Æschylus, "will ever remain the intellectual 'Sphinx' of the ages."¹

To students of Theosophy, however, the available references in the authentic literature, though few and far between, are sufficiently suggestive to indicate the Occult World's estimate of Shakespeare and his message. "My good friend—Shakespeare," wrote one of the Mahatmas, quoting from him in a letter. In her editorial opening the first volume of *Lucifer*, H.P.B. wrote that

"Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy" has proved more beneficent to the true philosopher in the study of the human heart—therefore, in the promotion of truth—than the more accurate but certainly less deep, science of any Fellow of the Royal Institution.

Again, we know from a letter addressed to Mr. A. P. Sinnett that H. P. B. wanted a student to write out "the esoteric meaning of some of Shakespeare's plays," for inclusion in *The Secret Doctrine*. Lastly, of course, we have Mr. Judge's famous statement:—"The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number."²

Shakespeare, then, we regard as a real and

magnificent creative genius of the type described by H.P.B. in her article on "Genius,"³ who coming under Nirmanakayic⁴ influence, became a myriad-minded master of life and language. His amazing and expansive knowledge of the super-physical and the invisible, his profound and penetrating insight into human nature, his transcendent and kaleidoscopic imagination, his intuitive perception and his inspired passages—all these are at once the expression and the evidence of the inwardness of his plays, and of the influence of the Adepts.

Now, what was the nature of Adept influence upon the mind of Shakespeare? It is not to be thought that Shakespeare was, from the first, under the special care and observation of the Great Lodge, but rather that "the superior possibilities embedded within himself were what Adept Inspiration spurred into stronger activity." This was possible because of the largeness of his mind and the receptivity of his soul. The breadth of his Soul-Life could cause the offspring of his Fancy "to share richly in the vital Fire that burns in the higher (Image-making) Power." Above all, he possessed the power, as John Masfield has written, to touch "energy, the source of all things, the reality behind all appearance," and to partake of the storehouse of pure thought.

We will not, however, find it an easy task to unravel the mystery locked up in the allegory, symbol and character portrayal of the great plays. For, "the very fact that Shakespeare remained unconscious of the Nirmanakayic influence which his genius attracted shows that we must not expect the unadulterated expression of Divine Wisdom in all he created."

³ *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13.*

⁴ "A Nirmanakaya is... a member of that invisible Host which ever protects and watches over humanity within Karmic limits... A Nirmanakaya is ever a protecting, compassionate, verily a guardian angel to him who becomes worthy of his help." (*The Theosophical Glossary*, "Nirmanakaya").

¹ *The Secret Doctrine*, II. 419.

² *Echoes from the Orient*, p. 6.

Having thus stated the Theosophical position *vis-à-vis* Shakespeare, we must note the two possible methods of studying any of his plays in terms of the Esoteric Philosophy. The first is the easier one of extracting the essence of Theosophic truth out of the significant lines and passages of the play. The second is the more difficult one of interpreting the entire tale and theme of the play according to one or more of the seven keys of symbolism suggested in *The Secret Doctrine*. We will use both methods, but concentrate on the second, which, if less easy, will be found more fascinating. Before that, however, it would be useful to place *The Tempest* among Shakespeare's last plays.

It is a platitude of modern Shakespearean criticism that the group of plays⁵ to which *The Tempest* belongs and of which it is presumably the last, were written in "the final period" of the playwright's life and show certain distinctive features.

All these plays are romances, neither tragic nor comic but both, full of unexacting and exquisite dreams, woven within a world of mystery and marvel, of shifting visions and confusing complications, "a world," as Mr. Lytton Strachey writes, "in which anything may happen next." Strangely remote from "real" life is this preternatural world of Shakespeare's latest period, and this universe of his invention is peopled with many creatures more or less human, beings belonging to different orders of life. This romantic character of these plays is reflected in the richness of their style. Here we have the primary facts of poetry, suggestion, colour, imagery, together with "complicated and incoherent periods, softened and accentuated rhythms, tender and evanescent beauties." These plays reach the very apex of poetic art, revealing a matured magnificence of diction and the haunting magic of the purest lyricism, altogether appealing more to the imagination than the intellect.

The fundamental feature, however, of these plays of the final period is the archetypal pattern of prosperity, destruction and re-creation which their plots follow. Virtue is not only virtuous,

but also victorious, triumphant, and villainy is not only frustrated, but also forgiven. These are dramas of reconciliation between estranged kinsmen; of wrongs righted through repentance, not revenge; of pardon and of peace. Tragedy is fully merged into mysticism, and the theme is rendered in terms of myth and music, reflecting the grandeur of true immortality and spiritual conquest within apparent death and seeming defeat.

Upon the firm foundation of the accepted conclusions regarding the chronological order of the plays of Shakespeare, and of the peculiar features of the final period, modern critics have been only too eager to build their plausible and picturesque interpretations.

We have, first, the Dowden doctrine, supported in different degrees by other critics, likening Shakespeare to a ship, beaten and storm-tossed, yet entering harbour with sails full-set to anchor in Stratford-on-Avon in a state of calm content and serene self-possession. This view gives the final period of the playwright the attractive appellation of "On the Heights," and perceives in these last plays the charm of meditative romance and the peace of the highest vision. *The Tempest* is reverentially regarded as the supreme essence of Shakespeare's final benignity.

Strachey's thesis, on the contrary, echoed partially by Granville-Barker, is that these faulty and fantastic last plays show that Shakespeare ended his days in boredom, cynicism and disillusionment.

Dr. E. M. W. Tillyard, in his *Last Plays of Shakespeare*, like Middleton Murry, not only sees no lack of vitality, no boredom with things, no poverty of versification in these later plays, but, in fact, evidences of the work of one whose poetical faculty was at its height. Dr. Tillyard's theory has much to commend it, but does not pursue its assumptions to their logical conclusions, and is based on the proposition that Shakespeare was an artist before he was a philosopher.

The best and latest interpretation is that of Prof. Wilson Knight in *The Crown of Life*. He regards Shakespeare as equivalent to the dynamic spiritual power manifest in his plays, and finds in the Shakespearean sequence the ring of reason, order and necessity. Shakespeare's plays, he believes, spell the universal rhythm of the motion

⁵ *Pericles, Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, Henry VIII, The Tempest.*

of the spirit of man, progressing from spiritual pain and despair through stoic acceptance and endurance to a serene and mystic joy. Whereas in the tragedies is expressed the anguish of the aspiring human soul, crying out from within its frail sepulchre of flesh against the unworthiness of the world, these last plays portray the joyous conquest of life's pain.

Professor Knight's interpretation comes closest to the Theosophical view of Shakespeare's final period, and many of his conclusions are broadly true. It is, however, important to point out the danger of stereotyping the divisions of Shakespeare's life, and the need to be wary how we apply our labels and demarcations to what G. S. Gordon calls "so mobile a thing as the life and work of man." In the last analysis, Shakespeare was all of one piece; he developed, but in his development cast nothing away; his attitude towards life deepened, but his essential outlook always remained the same.

As students of Theosophy, however, we can attribute the surpassing majesty of the plays of the final period to the great expansion of the creative power and dramatic skill of Shakespeare which had first begun to show themselves in their grandeur in the tragic productions of "the middle period." This expansion was the product, as it is the proof, of the Adept Inspiration from which Shakespeare progressively benefited and on which he increasingly drew. Thus, we are fully prepared by the Theosophical philosophy to regard the final period as the culmination of a spiritual Odyssey which found its consummation in *The Tempest*, his last and greatest of plays. In this view, then, *The Tempest* is a broader, deeper "embodiment of the qualities drawn from the higher planes of man's being in which Imagination rules," a perfect pattern of myth and magic as of music and marvel. Let us now closely consider this masterpiece in the light of Theosophy.

The tale of *The Tempest* is well-known but we shall briefly recapitulate its salient strands. It is, primarily, the story of Prospero, rightful Duke of Milan, and his charming child, Miranda, both banished by the usurper Antonio, his brother, and living unknown on a lonely island. Here, through a long period of successful study and practice,

Prospero has matured into a master-magician, and Miranda has flowered into a marriageable maiden. The play opens with a violent storm and a resulting shipwreck, caused at the bidding of Prospero by the invisible hosts of the elements, of whom Ariel is the chief. The royal party involved in the shipwreck is saved according to Prospero's plan, and is scattered on the shore, in three different parts of the island. Alonso, the King of Naples; Sebastian, his brother; Antonio, the usurper; Gonzalo, an honest old Councillor; and two Lords, Adrian and Francisco, land on one side of the island and most of them fall into an induced slumber, during which the vigilant and vile Antonio persuades the susceptible Sebastian to join in a plot to kill the King. Thanks to the intervention of the invisible Ariel, the plotters are prevented from fulfilling their purpose, and the entire party is led to look for Ferdinand, the son and successor of Alonso.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand has met Miranda and has been forced into her father's service, which he patiently undergoes until Prospero is pleased to bestow on him his daughter. At the same time, in a third part of the island, Caliban, the deformed and savage slave of Prospero, has been met first by Trinculo, the King's jester, and then by Stephano, a drunken butler, both of whom foolishly join the faithless Caliban in an abortive plot against his powerful master. These three groups are all, in the last Act, brought together near his cell by Prospero, after Antonio and Alonso and Sebastian have been made by strange and fearful sights and sounds to repent of their folly; after Ferdinand and Miranda have been treated to a visionary masque, played by spirits; and after Caliban and his companions have been brought to their senses—all of which is accomplished through the agency of Ariel. The play ends with the restoration of disturbed harmony, the recompense of the good and the repentance of the deluded, the release of Ariel from Prospero's service, and the reconciliation of one and all to the new order ushered in by Prospero, who shows himself to be a man of wisdom and a master of destiny.

Let us first briefly consider the different interpretations offered of the underlying theme before

we go to our own. There is first of all the excellent but purely artistic interpretation of Dr. Tillyard whose thesis is that *The Tempest* gives us the fullest sense of the different worlds within worlds which we can inhabit, and that it is also the necessary epilogue to the incomplete theme of the great tragedies.

A more ambitious and comprehensive attempt is that of Professor Wilson Knight, who interprets the theme of the play from various points of view—poetical, philosophical, political and historical. Poetically, he considers the play artistic autobiography, its meanings revealing a wide range of universal values. Philosophically, Knight maintains that *The Tempest* portrays a wrestling of flesh and spirit. Politically, Knight interprets the play as the betrayal of Prospero, Plato's philosopher-king and a representative of impractical idealism, by Antonio, Machiavelli's Prince, and a symbol of political villainy. Lastly, the play is regarded historically by Knight as a myth of the national soul, Prospero signifying Britain's severe, yet tolerant, religious and political instincts, Ariel typifying her inventive and poetical genius, and Caliban her colonizing spirit.

Another serious attempt at interpretation is that of Colin Still, whose study of the "timeless theme" of *The Tempest* has not attracted the attention it deserves. He regards this "Mystery play" as a deliberate allegorical account of those psychological experiences which constitute Initiation, its main features resembling those of every ceremonial ritual based upon the authentic mystical tradition of all mankind, but especially of the pagan world. Still takes Prospero as the Hierophant, and in one aspect, as God Himself; Ariel as the Angel of the Lord, Caliban as the Tempter or the Devil, and Miranda as the Celestial Bride. The comedians, Stephano and Trinculo, led on by the Devil, constitute a failure to achieve Initiation; the experiences of the Court Party, which is of purgatorial status, constitute the Lesser Initiation, its attainment being self-discovery; while Ferdinand attains to Paradise, to the goal of the Greater Initiation which consists in receiving a "second life." The wreck is considered symbolic of the imaginary terrors of the

candidate for Initiation, and the immersion in the water as symbolic of his preliminary purification. The Masque is regarded as apocalyptic in character, and the cell is taken to represent the Sanctum Sanctorum, only to be entered after full initiation. And so Still goes on giving every detail the status of a semi-esoteric symbol drawn mainly from pagan ritual. Students of Theosophy will find that Still's thesis, though basically sound, is obscured by theological terminology, and that its detailed application often leads to a certain forcing of analogy. Prospero, for instance, is a man, not God, and Caliban is too clearly a thing of nature to be called a Devil, or Satan. Still's centre of reference is altogether less in the poetry or in the Esoteric Philosophy than in a rigid system of pagan symbolism applied to the play. We shall refer to Still's laudable effort in our own Theosophical interpretation.

In Theosophical terms, we can approach The Tempest from at least three angles—the psychological, the cosmic and the occult. Of these, we shall adopt the last for detailed interpretation of the characters in the play. Before that, however, it will be worth while to indicate how the psychological and the cosmic keys may be applied.

The psychological key enables us to construe the theme of *The Tempest* in terms of the principles of the human constitution and the everyday experiences of the majority of mankind. In this line of interpretation, Prospero would represent Atman, the Universal Self, which overbroods the remaining constituents of man, and allows for their rescue from all internal disequilibrium, thus producing that divine and unifying harmony which spells poise and proportion, as well as power and peace. Miranda, the daughter of Prospero, would be that specialization of Atman which we know as Buddhi, the spiritual and at present passive principle in man, the vehicle of Atman, and at once the expression and the essence of pure wisdom and of true compassion. Ferdinand, the Prince who aspires to the companionship of Miranda, could be made to symbolize the Higher Manas, the incarnated ray of the Divine in Man,

⁶ It is in this sense, alone, that Miranda represents the fallen and Sleeping Soul of the uninitiated and deluded man that Still takes her to be.

while Antonio, the usurper who plans to secure personal power at the cost of his weakening conscience, could represent the Lower Manas, or the Desire-Mind. To complete the picture, Caliban could be taken as the Kama-rupa or the passional part of man in material form, and Ariel as the type of the assemblage of presiding deities, Devatas or elementals, in the human personality. This, in silhouette form, would be the system of symbols that could be constructed on the basis of the psychological key—a system which, interesting as it is in its ramifying implications, it would not be difficult for any careful reader of Madame Blavatsky's Key to Theosophy or Mr. Judge's Ocean of Theosophy to develop.

The second interpretation, which we have called the cosmic, follows from a comprehensive view of the Stream of Evolution in Nature, of the Great Ladder of Being. This interpretation is implied in H. P. B.'s oft-quoted statement that

the Ego begins his life-pilgrimage as a sprite, an "Ariel," or a "Puck"; he plays the part of a super, is a soldier, a servant, one of the chorus; rises then to "speaking parts," plays leading roles, interspersed with insignificant parts, till he finally retires from the stage as "Prospero," the magician.⁷

In this line of interpretation, the play presents an image of the glorious supremacy of the perfect-ed human soul over all other things and beings. At the peak of the evolutionary ascent stands Prospero, the representative of wise and compassionate god-manhood, in its true relation to the combined elements of existence—the physical powers of the external world—and the varieties of character with which it comes into contact. He is the ruling power to which the whole series is subject, from Caliban the densest to Ariel the most ethereal extreme. In Prospero we have the finest fruition of the co-ordinate development of the spiritual and the material lines of evolution. Next to him comes that charming couple, Ferdinand and Miranda, exquisite flowers of human existence that blossom forth under the benign care of their patriarch and guru. From these we descend, by a most harmonious moral gradation, through the agency of the skilfully interposed figure of the good Gonzalo, to the

representatives of the baser intellectual properties of humanity. We refer to the cunning, cruel, selfish and treacherous worldlings, who vary in their degrees of delusion from the confirmed villainy of Antonio to the folly of Alonso. Next, we have those representatives of the baser sensual attributes of the mass of humanity—the drunken, ribald, foolish retainers of the royal party, Stephano and Trinculo, whose ignorance, knavery and stupidity make them objects more of pity than of hate. Lowest in the scale of humanity comes the gross and uncouth Caliban, who represents the brutal and animal propensities of the nature of man which Prospero, the type of its noblest development, holds in lordly subjection. Lastly, below the human and the animal levels of life, in this wonderful gamut of being, comes the whole class of elementals, the subtler forces and the invisible nerves of nature, the spirits of the elements, who are represented by Ariel and the shining figures of the Masque who are alike governed by the sovereign soul of Prospero. Shakespeare obviously believed in these invisible spirits and recognized their place in the panorama of evolution. This cosmic interpretation, however, though interesting in itself, does not require any special ingenuity for its application, and is neither so comprehensive nor so inspiring as the third, to which we now turn.

① The esoteric or occult is the highest approach to any allegorical system. The Tempest can be made, on this approach, to yield a subtle and complete account of the ways and workings of the Great Lodge of White Adepts, and the trials and tests on the path of probationary chelaship, leading, through a series of progressive awakenings, to the attainment of the goal of conscious godhood, even amidst the irksome conditions of earth-life. This esoteric interpretation is really based on two postulates—of the probationary character of all incarnated existence, and of the ceaseless unfolding, from within outwards, of the whole of Life. The student will do well to refresh his memory of the scheme of human evolution and occult training as given in the preface to Madame Blavatsky's Raja-Yoga or Occultism which we shall now proceed to apply to the characters of The Tempest.

To start with, let us understand the character

⁷ The Key to Theosophy, p. 34 (Indian Edition, 1948).

of Prospero. By various critics, Prospero is regarded as a magician, a superman, the spirit of Destiny and the symbol of Shakespeare himself. In our interpretation he is a perfected human soul, a god-man, an Adept, the wise master of nature and the compassionate despot of destiny, the creator of his own circumstances, and the designer of the drama of the Shakespearean world. Above all, he is the accomplished personification of that super-state which the earlier Shakespearean characters aspire to, but never attain.

H. P. B. defines an Adept as

a man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially of the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being.⁸

More simply, she defines an Adept as, in Occultism, "one who has reached the stage of Initiation, and become a Master in the science of Esoteric Philosophy."⁹

In the light of these references, Prospero becomes for us a logical conception. We see him at the beginning of the play standing

like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space. He holdeth life and death in his strong hand.¹⁰

This state has been attained through protracted study and effort which had begun even when he was the reigning Duke of Milan.

The government I cast upon my brother,
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies." . . .
I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeness and the bettering of my mind
With that, which but by being so retir'd
O'er-prized all popular rate. . . .

This is considered by many a critic to be his "fatal flaw" whereas actually Prospero was obeying "the inward impulse of his soul, irrespective of the prudential considerations of worldly science or sagacity." Far from having been, therefore, a scholar unfitted for direct action, he was a

⁸ *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 1.

⁹ *The Theosophical Glossary*, "Adept."

¹⁰ *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 71.

spiritual recluse on the brink of magical power, who has spent his period of retirement on the lonely island in perfecting his adeptship. This retirement is symbolic of the mental renunciation by the chela of the material things of life. When he attains to full adeptship and complete mastery over himself and nature, Prospero, as a member of the White Lodge, now performs one of its two tasks, viz., to bring, in his turn, prospective members and probationary chelas to the island on which he has attained perfection. It is on this sacred mission that he is engaged throughout the play.

Personification of wisdom and compassion that he now is, he has become one with destiny, one with the purpose of the great law of Karma. His name itself is allegorical of his beneficent benignity. In this light, we should regard Antonio and Alonso, not as Prospero's personal enemies, but as types of humanity who, in their ignorance and delusion, disturb the divine harmony that they are then compelled by their destiny to restore, and who, in their folly, curse the aspiring chela who returns amidst them as an Adept, only to bless. Prospero, then, uses his tempest-magic only to draw the deluded to his island, teaching them through disaster to repent of their evil doings, and then raising them through his forgiveness. He is, thus, the eternally compassionate one who redeems the society that rejects him by the dynamic spiritual power which he radiates, even in repose. Prospero's consciousness is already set beyond the horizon of ordinary men, in eternity; he is elevated above the petty, personal motives of average humanity, and he feels the profound pain of the Great Instructors at perceiving the unteachability of some of their pupils.

Finally, we must note the true significance of his final speech, the Epilogue. Having consummated his purpose and performed his first task, Prospero, the Adept, renounces the formal robe of the magician and resumes the ceremonial appearance of a duke. He has attained to a higher degree of Adeptship. He will return to earth-life as a *Rajarishi*,¹¹ or divine ruler, and now

¹¹ "One of the three classes of Rishis in India; the same as the King-Hierophants of ancient Egypt." (*The Theosophical Glossary*, "Rajarshis").

undertake the more difficult task of directing, under royal guise, large masses of men, and re-establishing righteousness on earth. When he does this, Prospero, the Adept, like Padmapani of the Buddhist legend, completely identifies himself with the sufferings of mankind and assumes the burden of helping men to find their salvation. So much for Prospero.

(To Be Concluded)

ASOKA'S HUMANISM

Any system of life which makes human interests paramount is Humanism. The remarkable extent to which the Emperor Asoka achieved this within his realm and outside is well brought out in a short but valuable study recently reissued.¹ The first part deals with Asoka's Humanistic philosophy; the second is an illustrative selection of Asokan Edicts.

The book has a valuable message for modern India. If it is our desire to make use of what we have inherited as the background for our reconstruction, we have to establish human relationships afresh on the principles of peace and social justice, unity, concord and tolerance. For a nation that has adopted the "Wheel of Dharma" as its emblem, it should not be difficult to adopt the Dharma culture of Asoka, which that wheel symbolizes.

As a system of totalitarian administration, the Mauryan Empire, organized on the basis of

¹ *Asoka's Humanism*. By DR. ISWARA TOPA. (Press-arts Limited, Hyderabad.)

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, was almost perfect. It had brought about the solidarity of the State and had established kingship on sound foundations, but this had been done at the expense of the individual. Asoka himself had been schooled in the Mauryan tradition, and was the spirit incarnate of the Mauryan imperial ideal until, in the ninth year of his reign, the bloody Kalinga War opened Asoka's eyes to the evils inherent in the perpetuation of a supreme political organization.

As a result he repudiated the former polity and rebuilt the State on the humanizing principle of the commonweal. He emphatically denied that man and society were for the State, insisting that the only justification for the State was the promotion of human welfare. He based his "new" polity on the paternal relationship, and introduced *Ahimsa* or the principle of humanism as its key-note.

It must be noted, however, that the paternal relationship of the ruler to the ruled was not, as claimed by Dr. Topa, an innovation of the Emperor Asoka. We find the same ideal mentioned in earlier Vedic wisdom. The Rajarishis antedated the Sages who hymned the Vedas and it was the example of the Divine Rulers which Asoka copied, influenced by the Wisdom of Gautama Buddha, who Himself derived His inspiration from the long line of Illustrious Sages who preceded Him. Asoka's great achievement was that he transformed the political or police state of the Mauryas into a cultural and moral state. And his exemplification and universalization of Buddhist culture made him supreme among the great kings of the world.

THEOSOPHY AND HUMAN SUBSISTENCE

Every question has a universal basis upon which its solution depends. The question of human subsistence, for instance, has in a fundamental sense far more to do with life than what goes into the mouth. It relates to an attitude of mind founded on a realization of our kinship with all manifested life and our essential identity with the root basis of all that is. The Upanishads say: "The self exists in close proximity to the heart and causes the body to exist by reason of the food which it takes in for its subsistence."

The means of subsistence varies with individuals and peoples. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna sets forth a threefold classification arising from the disposition of mortals and the three great qualities of Nature. The first is the quality of truth and the light of knowledge—*Sattva*. The second is the quality of action coloured by passion and desire—*Rajas*. The third is that of indifference, delusion and the darkness of ignorance—*Tamas*. Krishna says that

that food which increases the length of days, vigour and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, and which is savoury, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the *sattva* quality prevaieth. The food which is liked by those of the *rajas* quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain, and disease. Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in whom predominates the quality of *tamas* or indifference." (XVII. 7-10)

What is that *Sattvic* food? Considering that people live in widely distant places, under varied climates and conditions, it should be obvious that no set answer can be given that is exactly and specifically the same for all. The qualifications set forth by Krishna do not, however, cease to apply anywhere. The Theosophical sevenfold constitution of man is the same for all. So also is the essential purpose of his existence on earth. The fundamental laws of Nature under which he lives are universal. Therefore it is reasonable to deduce that there must be certain guiding prin-

ciples by means of which answers to these questions can be determined.

The kingdoms of Nature are seven. However varied Nature's manifestations, they are all included within these seven kingdoms. In the order of descending materiality and involution of spirit or consciousness in matter there are three invisible elemental kingdoms of nature forces that precede the fourth or mineral kingdom. In the order of reascending spirituality and evolution the life wave proceeds on its cyclic course through the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms or stages, culminating in perfect or divine man. We find enumerated in *Isis Unveiled*: 1. Elements, 2. Mineral Kingdom, 3. Vegetable Kingdom, and 4. Animal Kingdom. This enumeration is followed by an important statement too often overlooked.

The progress of matter from each of these planes to the plane above is continuous, and, according to Le Conte, there is no force in nature capable of raising matter at once from No. 1 to No. 3 or from No. 2 to No. 4, without stopping and receiving an accession of force of a different kind on the intermediate plane. (I. 329-30)

This is an important key to the problem of human subsistence. It suggests *why* the human frame, synthesizing all the kingdoms of Nature within it, must derive these in their proper order and sequence. Man is "a God in the animal form." (S. D. II. 81) His tabernacle only is the animal part of him. His physical sustenance, therefore, should come from the vegetable kingdom. It cannot well be taken directly either from the mineral or the animal because these do not provide sustenance truly natural to him.

The order of Nature's kingdoms in this Round shows what is the natural sequence of material evolution subservient to the spiritual and cyclic law.

Arrived on our Earth at the commencement of the Fourth in the present series of life-cycles and races, MAN is the first form that appears thereon, being preceded only by the mineral and vegetable kingdoms—even the latter *having to develop and continue its further evolution through man.*" (S. D. I. 159)

The fact that animal food is largely consumed by many people, more especially in the West, does not make it the best or truly natural food for

man. Rather, it is an unnatural deviation from the truly natural.

Being related to the universe, man epitomizes in himself all the kingdoms of Nature. Even as his body contains all the elements, so man unites in himself all forms. (*S. D.*, II, 290, 683.) Iron, for example, is but one of the minerals needed in the body. The order of material evolution in and through the kingdoms shows why we cannot eat nails to get it. This element for the human body must be derived from the kingdom immediately below it to be assimilable, namely, from the vegetable. Health cannot be maintained on minerals taken directly from the mineral kingdom.

The practice of vegetarianism embodies a refusal to take animal life. It may be contended that since Life is omnipresent, a diet of fruit and vegetables, and even every human breath, takes life in some form: therefore it is just as much a taking of life to eat an apple as to eat the flesh of an animal. There is a fallacy in this argument. If not, then why not eat human flesh? That would be just as "logical." It is precisely this so-called "logic" that is at fault because it does not take into consideration the Theosophical facts of life evolution.

All Life is a Brotherhood. The question of nourishment must be related to evolution within it. All Nature's kingdoms are involved in the question. None are left out. Where, then, shall we draw the line as regards the best means of human subsistence? This has been done in original Theosophical teachings:—

Note that no Adept even can disintegrate and reform any organism above the stage of vegetable: the Universal *Manas* has in the animal begun and in man completed its differentiation into individual entities: in the vegetable it is still an undifferentiated universal spirit, informing the whole mass of atoms which have progressed beyond the inert mineral stage, and are preparing to differentiate." (*The Theosophist* V. 22, October 1883)

There is thus a great difference for man and all Nature between eating an apple and killing an animal for food. Although both are Life, the development of intelligence in them is very different. There is consequently an enormous contrast in the psychological and physiological effects on man. There is also the question of robbing Nature. An animal's life is cut short when taken. This is never without pain to such a highly organized creature. It thus cannot complete that life cycle of needed experience. The purpose of Nature is thus deliberately frustrated. Man, under the eternal Law of Karma, cannot do this with impunity. The case is not the same with a fruit. It is allowed to ripen. Unripe fruit gets ripe and falls or is plucked. Beyond that stage it goes bad and rots. It has therefore completed its ripening cycle as fruit when taken for food. No such pain is inflicted as in the case of the animal. The life of the plant or the tree on which the fruit grew is thus not thwarted.

Vast differences between fruit and animal flesh as food are known. Fruit and vegetables properly grown are clean, wholesome and nourishing. Their mineral, vitamin and nutritional content is balanced by Nature when the soil, heat, light, moisture and cultivation are right and good. Animal flesh, however, is second-hand fruit and vegetables—never really satisfactory and rather poor food for man. Carnivorous animals like wolves are proverbially always hungry and never satisfied. Animal flesh is never really clean as food because the tissue cells excrete as well as assimilate. This results in the presence of toxic poisons. Such is not the case with clean fresh fruit. The human system can digest and assimilate food from the vegetable kingdom very well when it is not poisoned, inhibited, enervated or diseased. What is more, a wise vegetarian régime fulfils Krishna's description of the food liked by those in whom the Sattvic quality of Truth prevails.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The background of what Madame H. P. Blavatsky has written of Nâgârjuna is necessary to the full appreciation of the importance of a recent discovery in Tibet. She mentions in a foot-note in *The Voice of the Silence* that he was called the "Dragon Tree," Dragon standing as a symbol of Wisdom and Knowledge." And from her *Theosophical Glossary* we learn that his date of birth was 223 B. C.

Viewed as the greatest philosopher of the Buddhists, he was referred to as "one of the four suns which illumine the world."

He was, she writes, "one of the founders of the esoteric Mahayâna systems, not their exoteric travesties."

The allegory that regarded Nâgârjuna's "Paramârtha" as a gift from the Nagas (Serpents) shows that he received his teachings from the secret school of adepts, and that the real tenets are therefore kept secret. (*The Theosophical Glossary*, "Mâdhyamikas.")

The first teacher of the Amitâbha doctrine, he went to China and converted the whole country to Buddhism and is "now regarded as a Bodhisattva-Nirmanakaya."

With what interest, therefore, will Theosophical students learn of the discovery reported by Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg of Stanford University, on his recent six months' trip to Tibet, Nepal and India, of a manuscript copy, itself 200 years old, of a hitherto unknown book by this great Arhat!

Dr. Spiegelberg, an Orientalist deeply sympathetic with the East, was buying blankets to protect himself from the cold in the interior of Tibet.

The manuscript, written in gold and silver on black paper, fell from the blankets displayed to the professor by a Tibetan peddler who had just returned from a Lhasa monastery.

Needless to say, he bought it as well as the blankets. The "India and America" release of the United States Information Service mentions also that, with the help of a learned lama from Lhasa, Professor Spiegelberg had made a rough translation of the manuscript and was working at a more polished translation.

Nâgârjuna's work, it is said, is in the nature of a prophecy, depicting "the downfall of morals and manners in future times, which he calls 'the

black ages.'" He wrote of his plan to bury the book "under a lion-shaped rock," so that "it would be hidden and found again only when the dark age was at its worst and only a few still cared for truth and the upholding of law." Students of Theosophy will eagerly await the availability of the translation of this manuscript.

This spectacular find recalls what Madame Blavatsky wrote in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 38) of the approach of the day when

secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts....

An interesting communication from the young French scholar M. J. Doresse was read before the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres at Paris on June 17th. (*The Manchester Guardian Weekly*, June 23rd). He reported the discovery of almost the whole body of the Gnostic scriptures, "the biggest find of papyri ever made in Egypt." Consisting of over 1,000 pages which originally formed twelve volumes, the papyri, written in Coptic and ascribed to between 250 and 350 A.D., contain 37 complete works and 5 in a fragmentary condition. None of these works had previously been known to be extant, though some are recognizable as those quoted from by Irenæus and other Christian fathers in their anti-Gnostic writings. Many are described as secret works not to be shown to unbelievers. Five of the works are attributed to the Thrice-Great Hermes, but several others refer to New Testament figures—Paul, James, Thomas and Philip—and one is "The Secret Book of John."

These volumes were originally found by fellahin in a jar near Nag-Hammadi, thirty miles north of Luxor, on the east bank of the Nile, probably at the beginning of 1946. The discoverers apparently sold them for small sums to traders, and may possibly have destroyed some of the pages.

It is expected that the works discovered will "cast a flood of light on the centuries when Christian theology was crystallizing and pagan

philosophy, in its last form of neo-Platonism, was flowering." The decipherment of these works holds embarrassing possibilities for the claimants that Christianity is a unique revelation, and great interest for students of Theosophy, who know from H. P. B. that each of the Gnostic sects

was founded by an Initiate, while their tenets were based on the correct knowledge of the symbolism of every nation. (*The Secret Doctrine* II. 389)

We welcome *Islamic Literature*, the new monthly published by the well-known Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf of Lahore. The first number, for July, contains articles interesting to Theosophical students, e.g., "The Institution of Fasting in Islam" by M. D. Shakir, and "Religious Poetry in Islam," by Prof. A. J. Arberry. The opening editorial appeals to "the friends of Islam," who

do not entirely agree with the Muslims in all that the latter believe and practise. But they appreciate many things in the faith of Islam and admire the Muslims for certain traits in their character. Let not such friends stand aloof. Let them co-operate with us in points of agreement. We, on our part, are prepared to co-operate with them in matters that are common to us both. For one thing, when challenged by anti-religious forces, we Muslims are prepared to defend the common traditions of religion as against irreligion. Nay, we will go beyond this and stand up for the dignity of all the founders of religion whenever any one tries to cast aspersions against any of these great leaders of humanity. So our hands are outstretched for fellowship and co-operation. We want our friends of other religions to clasp this hand and thus pave the way for amity and concord between the warring religious communities of the world. Such a harmony, let us humbly suggest, will be the surest way of bringing about peace among the nations of the world, which looks so impossible in the present setting of world affairs. Because when humanity is at peace spiritually, it is bound to have peace on the material plane of existence as well.

All seekers after wisdom and all who aspire to practise Brotherhood will echo and reciprocate these sentiments. Those who have read our Theosophical Free Tract No. 9 on "Islam—Self-Surrender: A Study in Religious Tolerance" know of our sincere interest in Islamic Culture.

It examined Islam from the following approach and in the light of the following conviction:—

The correct view of religions and prophets is made available in Theosophy and it is our purpose here to present it in connection with the teachings of the Koran and the Prophet.

A discovery inexplicable except in the light of reincarnation has been made by Miss Elizabeth Cross in reference to young children's religious preconceptions. She has recently had to teach "Scripture" as part of her work, she writes in the August *Aryan Path*, and finds that even children who have had no religious teaching at home accept some ideas willingly and ignore others. As might be expected, their ideas of God differ, they being the children each of his own past. Some of the children, around five to seven years old seem to feel the need for "a very personal creator," but others show

that they imagine God as an immense power, capable of making the world and the natural order but not in the least concerned with small details. Many children have expressed this quite clearly, making one understand that their concept of God is lofty and of mature philosophy.

Even very young children have expressed their idea of the immensity of God. Miss Cross has never found any spontaneous response to the idea of God's being more in the church than anywhere else or that he is near them. And, though willing to accept Jesus as the Son of God, and usually also the idea that they themselves were in a sense God's children, "when someone attempted to teach them that God had come down to earth," i. e., that Jesus was God while he was on earth, "it was clear that they just didn't believe a word of it."

Miss Cross concludes thoughtfully:—

Watching children in their reaction to religious teaching has made me wonder how honest most adults are in their beliefs. How many of us try to accept teaching that our inner selves really reject? Would it not, perhaps, be better to become as little children and examine religious ideas, claims and philosophies in the light of our own inner convictions?

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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.

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