

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

KATHERINE TINGLEY, EDITOR

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"Nature gives up her innermost secrets and imparts *true wisdom* only to him who seeks truth for its own sake, and who craves for knowledge in order to confer benefits on others, not on his own unimportant personality."—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## OCCULT POWERS

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

**T**HERE is a universal craze for occult powers; and any mention of the phrase is sure to attract attention. Nor is it surprising that there are plenty of people ready to take advantage of this desire, and to offer to show us the way to attain such powers. But how often do we find what we really want? Who are the self-appointed teachers, who undertake by lectures and books and lessons to initiate us into mysteries and set our feet on the path of power?

But it all shows that people are realizing now more than ever that the real source of all help is to be sought within man himself; and that man is a being in whom the processes of evolution are to a great extent accomplished consciously, by his own intuition and will.

Still we have to remember, in connexion with occult powers especially, that all is not gold that glitters. Gold is tested by a touchstone; and there is one sure touchstone in the matter of occult powers; and that is the question of motive. Is conscience at the bottom of our aspirations, or is personal desire?

Personal desire is our great bane, by which we let ourselves be attracted to all kinds of objects. Desire is insatiable and grows by feeding, like a fire. To gain additional powers, while the force of personal desire is still unconquered, merely puts weapons into the hands of our chiefest foe.

Desire may be harmless in the beasts; but in man there takes place an unhallowed alliance between desire and intellect; and it is this which is the cause of his trouble. The Theosophical teachings show that the human mind stands midway between *Kâma* (selfish desire), and *Buddhi* (wisdom); and that we have to strive for a union between the mind and *Buddhi*, weaning the mind away from its subservience to desire. Hence

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it is taught that, before occult powers can safely or rightly be attained, we must purify our character by eliminating the selfishness from it. In other words, we must cultivate *spiritual* powers. The student of Occultism who is on the right path strives to live a life of service to others and to the Theosophical cause; and, instead of being ambitious for powers, he tries to get rid of that ambition, knowing that it is his chief obstacle to progress on the path he has chosen.

We find H. P. Blavatsky saying:

“Occultism is not Magic. It is comparatively easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation, are readily developed. But this is Black Magic — Sorcery. For it is the motive, and the motive alone, which makes any exercise of power become Black (malignant), or White (beneficent) Magic. It is impossible to employ spiritual forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can be used by the selfish and revengeful, as much as by the unselfish and all-forgiving; the powers and forces of Spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart — and this is DIVINE MAGIC.”

— *Practical Occultism*

In further pages of the same work, H. P. Blavatsky points out that Western ideas of education differ from Eastern in the great stress which is laid in the former on emulation and personal rivalry; an ideal which is not only found in education, but enters into every detail of life. Personality is developed, in contrast with the Eastern ideal of ‘non-separateness.’ It follows from this that what may be safe for one class of people may be altogether different for another; and that Western people have much preliminary training to undergo before they can be fit to develop occult powers.

But the existence of higher powers in man is of course a fundamental teaching of Theosophy. It is only insisted on that the right and safe road should be followed. For Theosophists well know that the attempt to seek occult powers for purposes of self-gratification, or any personal motive whatever, can but cause delays and disaster to the student of Wisdom. The difference between real Theosophy and the various counterfeits that use the name, is shown by the useful practical program of service to humanity followed by the former, and the weird fantastic lucubrations of the latter.

In Theosophy the same maxim applies as that enunciated by Jesus, when he said:

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

This means that we must first practise altruism, in deed, word, and

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thought, eliminating the personal motive; and thus alone can be laid the safe foundation for the attainment of powers. These latter, it is taught, *will come unsought, whenever they are needed.*

It is the essential nature of man always to be striving towards an ideal or perfection. The greatest of all obstacles in his path is self-love, in its various guises or ambition, pride, lust, etc. The great question for him is whether he shall feed the enemy within him, or whether he shall call forth the strength of his divine nature. It is a common-place that we suffer individually and collectively from the prevalence of self-love; which not only mars our individual life but sets the members of society at variance with one another. Now, when we aspire for 'occult' powers, which is it that we propose to do? To feed the animal, with its lusts and passions, thus giving aid and comfort to the enemy; or to invoke those nobler powers that shine down into our heart from the Spiritual nature?

If there is a true and noble ambition for man, it is surely the ambition to fit into his proper place and so to live as to be at peace with himself and a blessing to those who surround him. The ambition to master our weaknesses and failings, which cause so much trouble to ourselves and embitter our relations with others, is an ambition which can only lead us along the right path. But if our desire is merely to obtain powers that will minister to personality, or gratify curiosity and vanity, then we shall set foot on a path where we must choose between failure and the sacrifice of conscience and honor. For the passional nature is a ruthless and insatiable tyrant. Once aroused, it will lure us on and become our master. A man cannot serve two masters. Ordinary life may be a compromise between the good and the evil; but when we call forth the latent forces of our nature, compromise becomes no longer possible, and a choice has to be made. Thus the aspirant for power and knowledge finds himself at the parting of two ways, and must choose which of two roads he will take. Shall he choose that which cuts him off from the common lot and can at best make him an isolated pinnacle at variance with his fellows? Or shall he choose the path which submerges mere personality in the ocean of universal love and harmony, and leads to true Wisdom?



“THE secret with Theosophy is that it gives something more than a high ideal, it gives a divine ideal. It proclaims the shining truth that man has a divine nature; and he who knows of this higher nature has great possibilities. It is in everyone, but must manifest itself in action. It is this great fact that makes Theosophy so practical.”— *Katherine Tingley*

## THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

*A few Notes upon the Singular Resemblance between the Life-Histories of the different World-Saviors; and an Outline of the Theosophical Interpretation of the 'Solar Myth'*

(CONCLUDED FROM THE FEBRUARY ISSUE)

[As stated in the preceding issue, this article is a reprint of the first part of No. 8 of the series of Theosophical brochures called *The Pith and Marrow of Some Sacred Writings*, a series begun in the year 1908 under the personal direction of the Theosophical Leader. The purpose of this series of most interesting studies was to show in brief but comprehensive form certain fundamental Theosophical truths, or principles, which lie at the basis of the so-called 'World Religions,' and from which these religions drew their finest inspirations in their respective days of glory, before entering upon the period of formalism and literalism leading to spiritual decay. The various pamphlets are written by students of Theosophy under H. P. Blavatsky, and by others, members of the New York Aryan Theosophical Society — the parent Society of the early days.

— EDITOR]

**I**N these latter days of 'culture' the world has lost the meaning of the ancient universal symbology; the very persons who might be expected to preserve sacredly the esoteric meaning — the theologians — are tremblingly holding to the dead letter, or even throwing it away in despair of ever lifting the veil. But it was different in old times; precisely in accord with the inner development of the candidate was he inducted into the deeper meanings contained in the myths. It is an important portion of the Theosophical activity to arouse the spirit of respect for the knowledge of the ancients, and so to provide a sympathetic atmosphere in which a higher form of expression may flourish.

"You cannot fool all the people all the time!" said Lincoln, and it is simply unthinkable that a world-wide institution like the Mysteries, which has existed throughout the whole of human history to the present day — for it has not entirely perished — could have been an absolute imposture or at best a mere dramatic rendering of the common facts of nature. For those who are open-minded enough to judge of the evidence brought forward by Theosophy, and who have taken the broad view needed of the history of the Theosophical Movement, there are satisfactory proofs that there is an intelligent and beneficent power behind the strife and stress, a power spiritual yet human, which possesses a greater knowledge of human nature and its divine possibilities than the most cultured minds known to the world at large, and that it is this leavening spirit which holds the secrets of the Mysteries — secrets which are only concealed from those who will not open their eyes to read.

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After the terrific cataclysms which destroyed Atlantis and shook the whole world, "the Gods descended and taught the people" (H. P. Blavatsky); that is to say, great souls possessing profound knowledge of inner and outer nature which they had gained in former ages, willingly incarnated amid the descendants of the destroyed nations who had sunk almost to savagery, and gave them the keys to knowledge in the form of the Mysteries. It is not surprising that the forms in which the Mysteries were couched should be similar throughout the world; it would be singular if it were otherwise, for the underlying facts to be rendered were the same, the Custodians were in close touch with each other, and it would be unnecessary to use entirely different symbols for each country! H. P. Blavatsky says:

"The object of the Mysteries was to re-establish the soul in its primordial purity, or that state of perfection from which it had fallen."

The rule of nature is that the elder and more experienced brother should teach the younger, and, although mankind has perpetually striven against it, that Law has prevailed in the development of mankind, little though it has been recognised by historians. The various races have always had Teachers and Elder Brothers possessing a superior wisdom. It was these who formulated the myths which have endured so long without essential change. It is from the parent myths which were *based on knowledge*, that the present religions have grown. For ages the world has suffered under the reign of ritualism and anthropomorphic cults which even yet retain supremacy among those who believe everything in its literal meaning.

The conception that there is substantial foundation for all the world religions is a very different one from that of the conventional materialistic student of Comparative Mythology, and it is calculated to give a shock to the modern mind hypnotized by the ever-repeated suggestion that "we are the people," and that the wise among the ancients had not even common sense, much less deeper knowledge of the working of natural law than our best thinkers today. But it is true, nevertheless, that there are always Teachers watching over the race and giving the people the help they demand in proportion to their deserts.

In the *Institutes of Manu* the following is found:

"This universe existed only in the first divine idea yet unexpanded, as if involved in darkness, imperceptible, undefinable, undiscoverable by reason, and undisclosed by revelation, as if it were wholly immersed in sleep.

Then the sole-existing power, himself undiscerned, but making this world discernible, appeared with undiminished glory, expanding his idea, or dispelling the gloom."

This first divine idea yet unexpanded is the Universal Logos, and the

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broadest meaning of the Solar Myth may be taken as the appearance, or manifestation, of spiritual consciousness or LIGHT — the Logos — from the chaotic sea of darkness, symbolized as the Virgin, Mary or 'Mare,' the great Deep, the Woman or Vehicle who carries the Lunar or passive attributes of Isis, Diana, etc., and from whom the active Solar creative energy is separated. The Christ story, secondly, symbolizes at a later stage the struggle of Spirit with Matter — or the material condition — into which it descends 'to redeem the world,' *i. e.*, to raise it to a higher state of being or *self*-consciousness. The crucifixion typifies this; and the penitent thief who goes to Paradise is that portion of the world-consciousness which has advanced most rapidly in evolution. In some cults the Divine Word or Logos is represented as crucified in space on the quadruple cross of the four elements, and sometimes even without the cross.

The descent into matter takes place in minor cycles as well as in great cosmic ones, and the symbolism of the crucifixion is equally appropriate to the lesser world-periods, the Rounds; to the experiences of the Root-races and the minor races; and to the individual lives of men. The Higher Ego is crucified every time it incarnates, and the penitent thief is the symbol of that portion of the personal man fit to enter the heavenly rest of 'Devachan,' illuminated by the radiance of the Divine; and the impenitent thief stands for the impure passions and desires which go down to destruction.

Another subtil meaning, utterly ignored by the learned of the day, is the descent of advanced souls from high spiritual states into the darkness of the world at cyclic intervals, for the keeping alive of the spiritual life of humanity which is "crying in the night, with no other language but a cry."

Compared with the consciousness of the soul in its own condition, liberated from the astringencies of ignorance, the most joyous life on earth is a penitential pilgrimage. We have gradually become so fully identified with the limitations of the body that we have learned to love or at least to tolerate them; yet has not everyone, at some time, awakened from dreams in which there was such a vivid sense of freedom and largeness of life that the return to bodily consciousness was like the sharpness of steel? But Theosophy does not teach that we are to flee from or despise the earth-life: it is a necessary experience, and through the material forms — which are, after all, but the reflexions of the inner life — the spiritual world is shining transparently enough to those who know how to look. Wisely used, the physical life can be brought into subjection or harmony with the deeper life of the soul, and the popular blasphemous notion that the *body* is essentially impure, is a complete misconception. Even the New Testament repudiates that idea in the teaching that the

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terrestrial man is the Temple of God,<sup>4</sup> and we have no reason to suppose the true followers of Christ are intended to adopt the practices of St. Simeon Stylites or St. Labro, whose mortifications were identical with those of the self-torturing Hindû yogis of today. There is no logical reason why we should escape from physical existence until we have thoroughly mastered its opportunities. When we have trained our bodily instrument to obey the orders of the impersonal soul free from the perpetual hindrance caused by the impetuous desires of the lower nature, a wonderful path will open out for humanity.




But there is still another and a more personal meaning to the Mythos.

As Theosophy brings a message from behind the veil of the Mysteries, and as the Guardians of them have allowed a glimpse of the purpose of the primitive Initiation rites, with the possibility of their revival at no very distant period in view, every scrap of authentic information is valuable. While astronomically, the sun's descent into Hell means his abandonment of the higher celestial regions to descend below the equator to journey through the southern Zodiacal constellations, and cosmically, it means the burial of the Spirit in matter — as a vital factor in personal development it signifies the purifying initiatory rites in the crypts of the temples, or other dark and mysterious places called the 'underworld.' The Resurrection was the becoming a full Initiate, after the candidate had overcome the delusion of ignorance; after the middle principle in man, the passional-emotional, which separates the Higher Ego from the Lower Mind during ordinary life, had been purified and perfectly controlled.

"Not only is man more than an animal because there is the god in him, but he is more than a god because there is the animal in him.

"Once force the animal into his rightful place, that of the inferior, and you find yourself in possession of a great force hitherto unsuspected and unknown. . . . The god, given his right place, will inspire and guide this extraordinary creature, so educate and develop it, so force it into action and recognition of its kind, that it will make you tremble when you recognise the power that has awakened in you. . . . But this power can only be attained by giving the god the sovereignty. Make the animal ruler over yourself and he will never rule others."<sup>5</sup>

H. P. Blavatsky, who was allowed to give out a little definite information upon these subjects, says in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. II, pp 558-9):

"The initiated adept, who had successfully passed through all the trials, was *attached*, not *nailed*, but simply tied on a couch in the form of a *tau*  (in Egypt), of a *Svastika* without the four additional prolongations (thus , not ) , plunged in a deep sleep (the 'Sleep of Siloam,' it is called to this day among the Initiates in Asia Minor, in Syria, and even

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4. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."— *1 Cor.*, iii, 16-17

5. *Through the Gates of Gold.*

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higher Egypt). He was allowed to remain in this state for three days and three nights, during which time his Spiritual Ego was said to confabulate with the 'gods,' descend into Hades, Amenti, or Pâtâla (according to the country), and do works of charity to the invisible beings, whether souls of men or Elemental Spirits; his body remaining all the time in a temple crypt or subterranean cave. In Egypt it was placed in the Sarcophagus in the King's Chamber of the Pyramid of Cheops, and carried during the night of the approaching third day to the entrance of a gallery, where at a certain hour the beams of the rising Sun struck full on the face of the entranced candidate, who awoke to be initiated by Osiris, and Thoth the God of Wisdom. . . . Then appeared the Hierophants-Initiators, and the sacramental words were pronounced, ostensibly, to the Sun-Osiris, addressed in reality to the Spirit Sun within, enlightening the newly-born man."

The student of Theosophy will recognise that the initiation rite and the solar myth are similar to the experiences of the soul after death. It is born into the astral world, passes through the trials of Kâma-loka, becomes purified, and leaving behind it the lower principles, enters into the glorious state of Devachan after the 'second death.'

Unfortunately, mankind could not keep up the high aspirations which called forth the Mysteries in the natural course of events, and gradually, as spirituality waned, "the cross became in Cosmogony and Anthropology no *higher than a phallic symbol*," and finally the Eleusinian Mysteries remained the only pure ones in Hellas. Towards the end it became necessary to veil the Mysteries still more deeply and to eliminate the holy secrets of nature from even the inner program. Only the few were found worthy to understand the highest teachings, and at last their very existence was altogether withdrawn from public access in Western lands. The withdrawal began about B. C. 510 when Aristogeiton proposed that payment should be taken from the candidates for initiation, but of course the final destruction of the Mysteries did not take place till A. D. 396 when the Eleusinian Mysteries were suppressed.

That the Tau or Cross in its various forms is far older than Christianity, is now fully admitted. We find it carved on the temples of pre-historic America, and on the mysterious colossi of Easter Island, far out in the Pacific — those relics of the vanished races that date from the sunken Atlantis — it is as familiar to the North American Indian as to the Chinese, or to the Scandinavian of old; in fact, it is a universal symbol with more than one meaning. Strangely enough, the early Christians did not encourage the worship of the cross; it was not commonly used till several centuries had passed.

The sacraments were well known in antiquity, particularly the communion rite of Bread and Wine — or Water — which is very ancient. In its naturalistic meaning the Wine represented Bacchus the Sun-Fructifier, and the Corn Ceres the Earth-Substance, but the deeper import conveyed was the passing of the Higher Self into Matter to quicken its latent potentialities.



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The Litanies to the Virgin Mary today in use are practically identical with those of Mylitta; the Assyrian Venus, Astarte; Isis; the Greek Magna Mater; the Hindû Nârî, etc. H. P. Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* gives some curious examples of these Litanies showing the parallelism. The attributes of the Christian 'Mother of God' are the same as those of her predecessors who were worshiped around the Mediterranean Basin, and elsewhere.

The meaning of the passing of the Christ-Sun through the Zodiac requires longer treatment than can be given in this article: it is merely possible to say that the journey through the twelve signs corresponds to cyclic changes in the conditions of consciousness during life. "This tabernacle, O Sun," says the Egyptian *Hermes*, "consists of the zodiacal circle."

Besides the annual journey through the signs of the zodiac in direct order the Sun also passes through them in *reverse* order in a period of about 25,920 years, called the Precession of the Equinoxes, the Great Year. As it enters each new sign, modifications in human feeling take place, and the ancients recorded these in their ceremonies and allegories. We can easily trace some of these records, such as those mentioned by Jesus — who was himself the 'Lamb' or sign of Aries — that he would only give the sign of the Fish (Pisces) to that adulterous generation (*Luke*, xi, 29); and when he prepared for his 'Pass-over' he ordered his disciples to hire an *upper* room in the house of a man who carried a pitcher of water (*Mark*, xiv, 13); this was, of course, Aquarius. The order of the signs read backwards is, Aries, Pisces, Aquarius. The 'sign of Jonah,' Pisces, is now just passed and the Sun is entering into Aquarius, so we may reasonably hope that the "New Order of Ages" will bring a more purified generation. Already the spread of the Theosophical Movement has profoundly modified current thought, and with the help of the Râja-Yoga system spreading in every country the means by which the change will take place is apparent. Traces of the zodiacal sign preceding Aries,—Taurus, the Bull — are found in the Mithraic cult and in the Apis worship of Egyptian exotericism. Moses belonged to the Aries period as is shown by his symbolical ram's horns. Buddha's symbol was the horse, the Indian corresponding symbol for Aries, the Ram or Lamb, as he flourished during the period when the sun was in that sign.

Volney in his *Ruins of Empires*, that remarkable pioneer of modern critical inquiry, says that all men agree on certain main facts, such as that gold is heavy and sugar sweet, but not on doubtful statements, such as the question as to the nature of the interior of the earth, and he recommends a cessation of acrimonious controversy concerning what cannot be proved. Theosophy takes this position also; it says leave the eternal

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wrangle as to this or that creed, and find a basis of agreement for action. This can only be found in the recognition of the actual solidarity of the human kind: this once found the rest follows, for gradually the truth about the nature of things opens out to him whose ideals are high and impersonal and through whom the Divine Soul-life can play. But still, as a matter of fact, there is amply enough now for those who are not blinded by deliberately wilful prejudice, to prove the underlying unity of the ancient faiths, and this proof leads straight to the question: "Why should it be merely the *same* thing? Must it not then also be the *true* thing?" — a question that only needs honestly facing to command an affirmative answer. Every day the best thinkers of the age are coming nearer to the Theosophical position that there was once a clearer knowledge of the spiritual life than in these latter days. Sir William Ramsay, in a recent communication of remarkable originality, said:

"Wherever evidence exists, with the rarest exceptions, the history of religion among men is a history of degeneration: and the development of a few Western nations in inventions and in civilizations during recent centuries should not blind us to the fact that among the vast majority of the nations the history of manners and civilization is a history of degeneration."

Further, in speaking of the Golden Age whose memories linger in all parts of the globe, he says:

"That the golden age lay in the beginning, and every subsequent period was a step further down from the primitive period of goodness, happiness, and sympathy with the divine nature. We are too apt to pooh-pooh this ancient doctrine as merely an old fashion, springing from the natural tendency of mankind to praise the former times and ways. But it was much more than this. It was the reasoned view of the philosophers. . . . It lay deep in the heart of the pagan world. . . . A feeling like this cannot be safely set aside as false. It must be explained; and the only explanation is that it arose from the universal perception of the fact that the history of the Mediterranean world was a story of degeneration and decay."\*

Theosophy extends this story of degeneration and decay far beyond the Mediterranean Basin, and it proves by a vast mass of evidence that there was truly a Golden Age. Of course, the present conditions are necessary until we have learned the lesson they and they only can teach us.

H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. I, p. 272) says:

"The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, and its cosmogony alone is the most stupendous and elaborate system: *e. g.*, even in the exotericism of the Purānas. But such is the mysterious power of Occult symbolism, that the facts which have actually occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets to marshal, to set down and explain, in the bewildering series of evolutionary progress, are all recorded on a few pages of geometrical signs and glyphs."

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"The Doctrine of our Master [Confucius] consists in having an invariable correctness of heart, and in doing towards others as we would they should do to us."— *Chinese Scriptures*

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6. *Contemporary Review*, London, 1907.

## WHAT THEOSOPHY CAN DO IN THE PRESENT CRISIS

“As is the outer so is the inner; as is the great so is the small. There is but one eternal law, and he that worketh is one. Nothing is great, nothing is small in the Divine economy.”

— *Hermetic Writings*

“Attack not the religions of other men, but seeking whatever may be beautiful in those religions, add that truth and that beauty to thine own, to the glory of thine own life, to the glory of thine own religion.”— *Buddhist Scriptures*

“For hatred never ceases by hatred, but by love; this is the everlasting law.”— *Buddha*

“A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me; the fragrance of these good actions always redounding to me, the harm of the slanderer’s words returning to him.”

— *Buddha*

“Conquer a man who never gives, by gifts; subdue an untruthful man by truthfulness; vanquish an angry man by gentleness; and overcome the evil man by goodness.

“Before infirmities creep o’er thy flesh, before decay impairs thy strength . . . before the Ender . . . breaks up thy fragile frame and ends thy life — lay up the only treasure; do good deeds; practise sobriety and self-control; amass that wealth which thieves cannot abstract, nor tyrants seize, which follows thee at death, which never wastes away nor is corrupted.

“This is the sum of all true righteousness: treat others as thou wouldst thyself be treated. Do nothing to thy neighbor which hereafter thou wouldst not have thy neighbor do to thee. . . . A man obtains a proper rule of action by looking on his neighbor as himself.”

— *Mahābhārata*

“Renunciation of and devotion through works, are both means of final emancipation. But of these two, devotion through works is more highly to be esteemed than the renunciation of them.”— *Bhagavad-Gītā*


“There is this city of Brahman — the body; and in it the palace, the small lotus of the heart, and in it that small ether. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of the Self here in the world, and whatever there has been or will be, all that is contained within it.

— *Chhândogya-Upanishad*

“The Kingdom of God is within you.”— *Jesus of Nazareth*

## WHAT THEOSOPHY CAN DO IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS

H. A. FUSSELL

 TODAY, when the whole world is confronted with the most serious problems, on the right solution of which the future of civilization depends, many people are asking: “If Theosophy holds the key to these problems, as is claimed, why do not Theosophists offer some practical plan for their solution?”

In the first place, it is not the province of Theosophy to present

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ready-made plans in any department of human life for the approval or disapproval either of statesmen, or philosophers, or the general public. Such a proceeding would nullify the very intent and purpose of Theosophy, which is to give to man guiding principles, to awaken his Higher nature, the Divinity within him, and so enable him to solve life's problems himself, instead of being like a child in leading-strings waiting for some one else to do it for him. You cannot feed to grown men knowledge with a spoon, much less great moral principles which must be assimilated and made part of our being in order to be efficacious, and which we ourselves must learn to apply in daily life. Men cannot be *made* good, but you can help them to *become* good. Men, worthy of the name, not only prefer, but insist on doing their own thinking. Besides, to think for another is dangerous for both parties, and provocative of much harm in that it hinders 'self-evolution,' which is the only way man can work out his destiny, either individually or collectively.

In the next place, though Theosophists are always ready to co-operate in solving life's problems, and are doing their best by example, and by writing and lecturing, to show men how to do so, their aid has not been openly sought by those who have the direction of the world's affairs in their hands. Why, then, should Katherine Tingley, the Leader of the Theosophical Movement throughout the world, add another to the various Peace-plans already before the public; especially as the more excellent features of these plans are to be found in the teachings of Theosophy, in the writings of its three successive Leaders, H. P. Blavatsky, William Q. Judge, and Katherine Tingley? The last named has most assuredly done her part by emphasizing the forgotten truths: the essential Divinity of Man, Universal Brotherhood, Karma, and Reincarnation, a knowledge of which is so necessary in our day; and by instituting a Permanent International Parliament of Peace which, before, during, and after the Great War, has been occupied in showing the world how alone an enduring and universal peace may be obtained. (See THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH for March, April, and May, 1923.)

What Theosophy is trying to do, and is doing with marked success, is so to leaven the thought of the world that those who really have the welfare of mankind at heart, will come together and work intelligently towards lessening the evils produced by individual and national indifference, selfishness, and ambition. And this can be accomplished, not so much by legislative enactments, as by bringing about a change in human nature, in men's hearts and minds, and this latter is a slow process. All thinkers are agreed that without a change of heart nothing permanent can be accomplished. Lord Bryce, whose long diplomatic career afforded ample opportunity to observe men and nations, writes: "The

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possibility of improving the relations between states and peoples with one another depends ultimately upon the possibility of improving human nature itself." This is Theosophic teaching, as the following quotations prove:

"We are working for the new cycles and centuries . . . working to establish right doctrine, speech, and action, so that the characters and motives of men shall undergo such a radical change as to fit them to use aright the knowledge and the powers, now coming to light."

— *William Q. Judge*

"We cannot expect universal peace at once, I know too much of human nature for that. We must learn to trust each other, individuals and nations both, and we must broaden our ideas as to the meaning of brotherhood. . . . *Universal Brotherhood means Universal Peace.*

"You cannot gain the power to adjust civic affairs, let alone international affairs, until you begin self-adjustment." — *Katherine Tingley*

Just now, more perhaps than at any previous time in history, the thought of the world needs guidance. Not only is each individual nation finding it difficult to adjust itself to the changes within its own borders, brought about by the World-war: changes so radical that they demand an entirely new attitude towards life; but the means of transportation have improved so enormously, aerial navigation and wireless telegraphy have brought all nations so closely together, that the problems of one are the problems of all. Moreover, these problems are so complex and so far-reaching in their consequences that their solution is becoming increasingly difficult. Add to this the sporadic attempts to use force when it seems impossible to come to a working agreement through discussion and compromise, and the fact that in some countries the frank expression of personal opinion is positively dangerous, and it becomes increasingly evident that there is need of some great constructive ideal, some new all-compelling unifying conception of life to make mankind whole again.

In spite, however, of the disintegrative forces which are just now so active, there is, to offset them, a strong desire to bring about a nobler, better, more spiritual state of things than exists at present. To do this, however, we must learn to see things clearly, from a more impersonal point of view, without sentimentality or prejudice; an effort of the imagination is also needful to enable us to view things as they appear to other men and nations; and above all a high sense of duty coupled with an incorruptible sense of justice. In all affairs, national and international, as well as individual, we must heed the wise old words:

"Do justice. Justice being destroyed, will destroy; being preserved, will preserve; it must therefore never be violated." — *Laws of Manu*, VIII, 15

Ethics — the science of right living — should be the formulated statement of the Laws of our Being, for, in order to know what is the true goal of human endeavor, we must know what man is, and his relation to the

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cosmos of which he is an integral part. Theosophy alone can give us this knowledge. As H. P. Blavatsky says:

“Humanity is an emanation from Divinity on its return path thereto.”

“The source of our individual consciousness and of the guiding intelligence in the vast scheme of cosmic evolution is one and the same.”

“The upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings,”

whereby we learn to know better the cosmic process and learn to cooperate more effectively with it.

Nearly fifty years ago H. P. Blavatsky said that in the twentieth century men would accept more and more of Theosophy, unconsciously no doubt, in many cases, for the trend of modern thought is in the main along the very lines indicated by her in her books, *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Key to Theosophy*, from which the above quotations are taken. In this connexion it is interesting to note what William McDougall, Professor of Psychology in Harvard University, says in his latest work, *Ethics and some Modern World-Problems* (1924):

“If we recognise the truth that we are part of the cosmic process, not passively enduring parts, but rather the growing parts of the evolutionary process, the parts in which the creative energy of Life and Mind finds its fullest expression, parts in which intelligent purpose is beginning to take a vastly wider scope than it has done in the past, then we shall see that it is our highest task . . . to discover how we may best co-operate in the cosmic process, so guiding it [we would prefer to say, *so working with it*] as to carry to yet higher levels that highest product of evolution, the cultured life of well-organized societies, in which alone human nature can realize its highest potentialities. . . .

“Ethics can no longer be content to seek out and to formulate the ideal of conduct for human nature as it is; it must also assume the responsibility of formulating an ideal of human nature as it may come to be. The first step towards the new ethical synthesis must be the frank realization that Ethics cannot be divorced from Politics. . . . As Edmund Burke has said, ‘the principles of true politics are but those of morals enlarged.’”—pp. 160-162

According to Mr. McDougall, what is paralysing right thought and action at the present time is the conflict between what he calls ‘Universal Ethics’ and ‘National Ethics,’ neither of which, he says, is capable of guiding mankind aright. We by no means accept all the strictures that Mr. McDougall makes on ‘Universal Ethics,’ which he confuses with ‘Universal Individualistic Ethics,’ which is something vastly different. He uses now one term, now the other, without distinguishing between them. In our opinion, Universal Ethics, to be worthy of the name, must include National Ethics and determine its scope. In reality there is an ascending scale of ethical values, leading to problems of greater and greater complexity, which may be thus formulated: (1) the Individual; (2) the Family; (3) the Nation; (4) Humanity; but throughout the individual is paramount, for all movements of reform which aim at

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accelerating the moral and spiritual progress of mankind must first have inception and be thought out in the mind of some *individual*. All ideals are first conceived there, and are then gradually propagated among an *élite*, before influencing the 'group-mind,' whether of the nation or of humanity. The fear expressed by Mr. McDougall that the general acceptance of Universal Ethics will result in a dead level of what he terms 'Cosmopolitanism' is unfounded: nations, no more than individuals, will not become merged in a colorless, homogeneous mass of human beings, alike all the world over, nor will the advanced portions of mankind be degraded to a lower level of evolution, through the prolific birthrate of the less developed in comparison with the restricted birthrate of the more intellectual and so-called higher classes, for true Universal Ethics aims at improving the mind and morals of *all*, no matter to what class they belong. Theosophy rejects the crude Old Testament maxim, "be fruitful and multiply," and teaches everybody that the ideal of married life should be "fewer and *better* children." As Katherine Tingley says:

"Men and women should study the laws of life and the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood even before marriage. Home should be acclaimed as the center from which the higher life of the nations is to spring."—*Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*, p. 139

The Theosophical Society is *not* a political organization. "As a society it takes absolutely no part in national or party politics." Its position towards politics generally may be thus defined: "To seek to achieve political reforms before effecting a reform in *human nature, is like putting new wine into old bottles.*" Nevertheless, Theosophists do believe in forming public opinion, and this, as H. P. Blavatsky says, "can be attained only by inculcating those higher and nobler conceptions of private" (and we would add, of public) "duties which lie at the root of all spiritual and material improvement." Further, Katherine Tingley writes:

"You may organize systems of thought, or found societies and associations for the betterment of humanity; but these can do little permanent good because there is lacking a universal system of right education for the youth."—*Op. cit.*, p. 168

Right education is the secret of world-betterment! Education in the service of humanity! And that is why Katherine Tingley has instituted her world-famous Râja-Yoga System of Education, in which "children are taught to regard themselves as integral parts of the nation to which they belong," and at the same time to consider all nations as members of one great family, having moral obligations and duties to perform in relation to other nations, obligations and duties which, if properly performed, will result in World Harmony, in Universal Brotherhood, and in Universal Peace.

To quote Katherine Tingley once more: "A new energy is being

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liberated from the center of life.” A new, wider, truer spirit of humanity is forming in the hearts of all, and amid the distressing problems which mankind is facing, problems of our own making, men and women are finding in Theosophy the courage and the strength to go forward in the light of the new day that is dawning. Possessing the wisdom that comes of a knowledge of Karma and Reincarnation, Theosophists can see more of the scope of the ‘ethical process,’ than is possible to those who are ignorant of these great truths. It is impossible for men to escape the consequences either of their thoughts or of their actions, Karma sees to that; and Reincarnation brings them back into an environment of their own making. Cowards may shrink, but the brave rejoice in the opportunity which the Good Law gives them of making good their mistakes, and making what amends they can for the suffering they may have caused. Learning through past failures, they will go on towards perfection, carrying their fellows with them, and reap the reward of ‘self-evolution.’ Such is the vision of hope which Theosophy gives to man.

### FROM THE IRISH SONG OF MAELDUIN A Wonderful Voyager of Dim Ages Ago

A. o'M.

THERE are veils that lift, there are bars that fall,  
There are lights that beacon, and winds that call —  
Good-bye!

There are hurrying feet, and we dare not wait,  
For the hour is on us — the hour of Fate.  
The circling hour of the flaming Gate —  
Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye.

. . . . .


The music calls and the gates unclose,  
Onward and onward the wild way goes —  
Good-bye!

We die in the bliss of a great new birth,  
O fading phantoms of pain and mirth,  
O fading lover of the old green earth —  
Good-bye, good-bye, good-bye.



## “TO BE, OR NOT TO BE”

R. MACHELL

O be, or not to be” is not the question for the most of us because we *are*, and know we are. Indeed, that is the only thing that we are sure of, our own consciousness. Our existence may be questioned, but the questioner must be conscious, and consciousness is the assurance of existence. We know that we *are*.

What troubled the morbid mind of Hamlet was a doubt as to the advantage or disadvantage of a change of state. Being intelligent he was aware that though he might destroy his body he could not be sure of thereby ending his existence.

It is probable that many of us, at times, have questioned the desirability of putting an end to conditions of life that seem unbearable, even at the cost of life itself; and it is probable that the same doubt that troubled Hamlet served to stay the act of many a would-be suicide: *“the fear of something after death.”*

This doubt as to the finality of death may seem unreasonable to one who has not faced the problem of existence in some definite form, and who has not sought an answer to the question “Is consciousness eternal?”

A sleeping man may seem unconscious; but is he? A dead man is assumed to be entirely devoid of any consciousness, in spite of evidence to the contrary, and in defiance of the teachings of religion. But all the evidence of unconsciousness is external; no man can say truthfully ‘I am now unconscious’; nor can he reasonably be sure that there ever was a time when he was so. How then can he hope for non-existence? The suicide seeking release from life deceives himself. He does not seek to put an end to life, but to the uncomfortable conditions in which he finds himself involved. The mystical aspirant to the bliss of non-existence is deluded by the selfishness of his desire for bliss, which is a state of consciousness; unconsciousness is itself unthinkable. It is easy to talk about annihilation but not to think of it. So the philosopher who seeks to merge his personal consciousness in the universal is not seeking to annihilate consciousness but to set it free from mental limitations.

The word ‘mind’ is too often used as if it belonged alone to some unique and well-defined state of consciousness; whereas it does duty for a great variety of mental functions even in the person of a living, waking, entity; as well as for an indefinite number of antenatal and post-mortem

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states. To go no further than the duality, that may be easily observed in every normal human being,— if this were recognised for what it is, a fundamental fact in every person's mental equipment,— a vast number of perplexing problems would vanish, and a host of irritating misunderstandings would be avoided, thus dissipating many a cause of quarrel. Not that Duality is the last word of human consciousness; indeed, one might almost say it is but a stepping-stone to the triune character of every thing in nature.

Every stick must have two ends as well as a center point, which might be called its soul; for in it resides the essence of its unity. One end of the stick may point due north and the other end due south, while the center, unaffected, points nowhither. The ends may point alternately to every direction in space, eternally in contradiction one to the other; but the center is unmoved. Such is the mind. Its fluctuations are as perplexing as its contradictions; but the truth is unaffected; the Soul is undisturbed, but only so when it is Self-mastered.

The ordinary man is at the mercy of his 'wayward mind,' drifting uncertainly in impotent obedience to every wind of passion, or stranded on some sand-bank of opinion or tradition. Probably the most important lesson that we have to learn here in the school of life is the control of mind in all its aspects. When that has been achieved it will be time enough to talk about becoming the "master of my soul."

No sooner is the continuity of life grasped as a fact in nature, and the doctrine of Reincarnation accepted as the only rational theory of life for man on earth, than we begin to understand that we are students in the school of life, and that all our tribulations are no more than opportunities for progress which the wise man will seize and convert into valuable experience. To him there can be no question as to the advisability of learning his lesson, nor can he be in doubt as to his moral obligation to allow to every other man the right to live his life and learn *his* lesson. He will not easily be misled as to the nature of his duty to his neighbor or to the state; and he will think twice before he gives his support to capital punishment or to war.

Without the knowledge of Theosophy and the understanding of the most complex problems of life that it makes possible to us all, we may well accept the pessimism of the age as the last word in the philosophy of life.

But the Theosophist can rise above all doubts and gladly answer *Life is Joy!* "To be, or not to be" is not the question; for we *are*.

## THE 'I-AM-NESS' IN ME

E. A. NERESHEIMER

**O**NE of the ruling, everpresent motive powers in a human being is his consciousness of self, or self-hood. The mind is the seat of this power, and through it are received the impressions of all contacts, whether from objects outside of, or within himself. It is there also that impressions received are colored with a sense of ownership, or 'my-ness.' This sense of possession is usually termed Egoism, and defined as "a habit of regarding one's self as the center of every interest."

These remarks do not by any means touch upon the whole aspect of the self in man, nor do they refer to the dual nature of man's intelligence.

Upon a further analysis of the subject, we find that the self is a synthesizing co-ordinator that instantly probes and passes judgment upon successive occurrences which come before the mind's eye, formulating summary conclusions unique to the individual self alone. These conclusions have both a concrete and an abstract bearing upon the self according to its intellectual and moral inclinations. The concrete conclusions, that is, the practical material inferences drawn from the synthesizing process above referred to, generally take precedence, owing to habit and social custom, and express themselves in what is known as the personal interest or feeling of 'my-ness' in its grosser aspect. The abstract result is one that is much more important than the personal, and is grouped into a summary by the instrumentality of conscience, or, as is often the case, in accordance with artificial moral standards, according to the degree of positive development attained by an individual. Whether a deduction is based upon one or the other of these two aspects, depends entirely upon the moral and ethical sense of the self, in short, upon character.

There are always two sides to every question, as also to every decision made by the self: one related to purely selfish interests, the other to an underlying Principle, which latter is altogether unconcerned with the personality, or Egoism. We do not have to go far to seek the reason why human nature is so completely controlled by these opposites, for man on earth is shaped after the pattern of the Divinity that is mirrored in Nature, both in its outer and its inner aspects.

But why then are men affected so differently by these opposite aspects of Nature? The reason is, that man is constrained to evolve through HIS OWN efforts, and to rise through merit gained and victories achieved

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within himself; and in no other way. Hence those who deserve much, advance greatly, while others, who have but a faint urge towards progress, rise slowly, if at all.

When a person is seen to act with wise judgment under all circumstances, it is simply because his action has continuously been based, throughout a series of lives, upon upright and just conclusions. Another, who has acted carelessly and indifferently, cannot possibly have gained the sagacious judgment, discernment, and circumspection that lead instantly to right action on the impulse of the moment, as is the case with those who have made good use of their opportunities.

Many different factors are involved in the development of the average man, mostly due to artificially stimulated conditions which mark individual life and society. The self in association with other selves is continually exposed to injustice and impositions practised on the unwary by those who, consciously or unconsciously, deceive and oppress others weaker than themselves.

Human nature, as displayed in the undeveloped majority, is generally unnecessarily timid, and all too easily deluded by the self-seeking. It is a common experience that men otherwise sane often fall easy victims to those who habitually put on a bold front in order to impose their will on them. Some again are often disposed to take offense at the least provocation, relating everything to themselves, frequently even when no harm is either intended or implied. In the latter case an unwarranted strain results from such gratuitous assumptions, leading to misunderstanding and unnecessary complications.

Fear lies at the base of all such thought and feeling, and this is apt to grow worse as the consciousness becomes more and more centered in the personality, finally causing extreme sensitiveness and shyness, even in association with familiar companions and especially with strangers.

Timidity actually invites aggression, making it easy,—yea, actually tempting others to take advantage of and to wrong those who are weak and easily swayed. The effect in such cases is twofold, inasmuch as the injured person has, in addition to the harm that falls upon him directly, also to bear a part of the karmic responsibility. A practical step to be taken to prevent this would be to guard oneself by adopting a positive attitude of mind and bearing towards the bigoted, the idle, the domineering, and the selfish, who, by making undue and unreasonable demands, prey upon their emotionally sympathetic friends and, in their self-centered egoism, sap the very life-force from their weaker fellow-beings. No one is called upon to shoulder the responsibilities of another. As the scriptures rightly say: “it is best to do one’s own duty; performance of the duty of another is full of danger.” It is true that the path of duty is difficult

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to discern. The adoption of such a rule of life and conduct would obviate much trouble, and would put an end to undue oppression and strain, which many now have to endure.

Timidity is not only a weakness, but an encumbrance that is injurious and unfair both to ourselves and to others. In the first place, we often discover when it is too late that most of those who embarrass us are quite unworthy of our concern. A timid person is naturally at a disadvantage, and liable to succumb to fear, or, in any case, to an undue sense of awe, for those who put on a bold face and act with assumed assurance. Genuine modesty is indeed a virtue; but very different is an unreasoning meekness, unworthy of a self-respecting individual. Meekness is the outcome of a lack of self-confidence. It impedes and obstructs healthy natural development, and actually encourages and makes the way easy for selfishness in others. While being mortifying to ourselves, it 'breeds contempt' especially in those who have injured us.

Even a little knowledge will make it possible for us to overcome un-called-for shyness, and to think and act with at least a measure of assurance and dignity. But something more than mere mechanical means are necessary to serve us herein. Nothing could be more helpful, more energizing, than the thought of Life as a School of Experience, through which all have to pass in order to learn the lessons of life. We have already behind us a great store of assimilated experiences thus acquired in past ages, the benefits of which we are enjoying at the present time. The present moment is always decisive, and if we *will*, it is a turning-point for rising to a higher condition. Fixing the mind on the vital import and the sacredness of the moment, and giving as much attention as possible to affairs to be dealt with here and now, seeking to refrain from coloring them in the least degree with personal feelings and opinions, we shall gain more and more a positive command over ourselves, and can successfully meet difficult situations. With even a little practice in concentrating our attention on the moment and the particular event before us, we shall soon forget all shyness and be surprised at the positive attitude which we have thereby attained.

All the incidents that make up our evolutionary journey, consisting of a never-ending chain of successive present moments, lie between the wide expanses of the future and the past. These fleeting moments may seem insignificant for the time being, but they are the only reality that we have at our immediate disposal. Moreover, the whole of the future will likewise be made up of such successive moments, rich in opportunity, that may be held or lost; and this is the only thing that the self can make its own and retain for ever.

All beings are moving towards one and the same goal, and no ad-

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vancement, no high place, can be gained as a gift or by favor. Some forge ahead by sheer initiative, and by so doing gain much; and why? because they *deserve* much. A first step, boldly taken, opens up new vistas ahead, and new opportunities and possibilities present themselves to us. It is often surprising to find how easily they are attained, and how great the benefits are that we derive from them. But we must remember that continuity of effort is indispensable, and that we must never allow ourselves to 'rest on our laurels,' for that would debar us from advancing and from breaking new ground.

It is by continually delving within ourselves, ever deeper and deeper, in order to draw upon our own resources,— those still latent faculties that are our birthright — that those things are accomplished which "shall make us whole."

Within ourselves lie hid the greatest of all treasures, and when we find them, then we shall also discover the same in the hearts of our brother-men.

It is true that in the course of many lives and ages but comparatively few have, so far, come forth who are conspicuous for their intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom. The great majority, still hesitating to take the first step in positive effort, continue to lag behind. The average human being, at this period of evolution, remaining ignorant of the true laws of life, often wrecks his new-born powers by using them only for personal ends, thus really misusing and forfeiting that which he has with difficulty and pain acquired. The desire for possession of everything in sight, takes hold of some, and so they lose their grip on their innate good qualities. But Karma is at their heels, and every jot of injustice that has been practised must be rectified ultimately, in order to re-establish the equilibrium that has been disturbed. The Law is inflexible, and takes no account of mistakes made in ignorance.

The 'I-am-ness' in the individual that expresses itself in an emphasizing of the *personality* - - *i. e.*, Egoism — is the source of all mischief, sorrow, and trouble in the world. It will remain so for long ages unless we learn to know more of its real nature, and how to overcome it, through the higher 'I-am-ness in me' that is all-embracing and universal.

Life is fortunately so ordered that man is finally compelled to search for and cultivate the best that is in him. It is for this reason that he finds himself placed between two opposing forces which drive him ceaselessly hither and thither, until he finds his right bearings. In this way he has already built up his mind and body, so intricately and wonderfully made that he may contact all the manifold and exquisite beauties of the material world. And later, when he shall have opened the inner chambers of his being, he will be ready to claim also the unspeakable bliss that is in store for all the children of man, through participation in Divine

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Self-consciousness, which is his true birthright. Everything within the Cosmos is there to be cognised by man sooner or later; meanwhile he may have the joy of working, striving, aspiring. It is the 'I-am-ness' that "liveth in the heart-life of all" -- the very essence of the Godhead Itself -- that will thereby eventually realize the full purpose and glory of its being.

Communities, nations, and races also have this same sense of 'I-ness' that is inherent in each and every human being; and synthetically the same characteristics, interests, and aims as the individuals of which they are composed. As individual consciousness expands and widens its horizon, inasmuch as it shares in the interests and characteristics of the larger communities of which it is a part, so these latter again participate in the distinguishing traits of nations, races, and even of worlds, all of which are, so to say, but bodies or forms in which man dwells to achieve mental, moral, and spiritual expansion, on his pilgrimage towards Supreme Divine Wisdom.

We see that nations, like individuals, are struggling to add to and maintain their greatness. Each nation is different from every other; yet each has a character of its own, and also its special and unique field of development. Could any one believe that the great variety of nations and that which they each have to give to humanity, is but a matter of mere chance? No indeed! Each nation in its own special way is a teacher and a bestower of benefits to the whole human race, to all the peoples of the earth. How else but through the medium of various and dissimilar nations and races could the different and peculiar affinities that men cultivate find expression? May it not be that men, just for this purpose, must incarnate here and there, in divers environments, finding opportunities for developing all their faculties, and thus rounding out the whole of their nature?

The quest for perfection cannot be held up by our likes and dislikes. Only by rising above these, through observation, by acquiring new ideas, and making fresh associations, can we learn to know the world in which we live. It is the law of necessity, of Karma, that helps us forward towards the realization of the goal of our aspiration and our hope.

So let us seek a wider horizon, and bow to the behests of the eternal 'wheel of necessity,' which is the ladder of progress, and our friend.

Certain rare flashes of clear understanding, amounting almost to beatific vision, come at times to every individual, connecting him in universal kinship, instantly, and encompassing, as it were, a thousand and one apparently unrelated things. At such moments it would seem that new and heretofore unexplored regions of the soul are open to our perception, and we become conscious, if only for a moment, of the most

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wondrous harmony existing between our own little self and the True Self that ensouls the mighty expanse of all life and being. Our mind and body also, including the cosmos of tiny lives, of which we are formed, and which are therefore in our charge, become absolutely at one for the time being, in a conscious glow of friendly concord. In short, we are momentarily united with that universal consciousness that embraces both the worlds within and the worlds without. Discord is then non-existent, and the very 'my-ness,' the obtrusive personal 'I,' has for the while retired into complete abeyance; for we are then actually that part of our nature in which all knowledge and all bliss abide, in the Eternal.

The notion of I am myself — the 'my-ness in me,' the 'I-am-ness,' — is the strongest, the most stable, indeed the only enduring state of being; for in its highest aspect it changes never. Through pleasure and pain, the 'I-consciousness' ever holds its own; whether it enjoys, or suffers, it is always the same center around which, and before which, the whole panorama of life unfolds. In an Indian allegory it is symbolized as the Dancer in the embrace of Matter, moving ceaselessly in rhythm to the tune of the Flute-player — Vishnu — the Godhead in manifestation, that can never be thought of as apart from 'thyself.' "Fire cannot burn it, water cannot drown it, the wind cannot dry it away. It is indestructible, everlasting, unborn, and inexhaustible." The earth, the stars, and all the universes, — each is centered around its own peculiar I-consciousness. When the Godhead goes forth into manifestation, then Ahankâra or Ego-ship appears: first in the Logos, in Mahat — the Divine Mind — where the primeval shadowy outline of Self-hood, that is the basis of all conscious and semi-conscious being, appears. In the course of evolution it becomes reflected in individual human consciousness as the 'I-am-ness in me'; which shall evolve to a fully Self-conscious Divine Being.

## THE PEACE OF SELF-CONTROL

H. T. EDGE, M. A.



THE following quotation from the late Stopford Brooke, though written many years ago, is certainly not less applicable to the conditions of today. Writing on "The Peace of Self-Control," he says:

"In how many of our lives is there any temperance at all, or any desire to work for it? Who among us realizes, before we plunge into some excitement or into any unbridled thinking of ourselves the meaning of that image of Giotto — where the noble Virtue of Temperance



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stands binding the hilt of her sword to the scabbard lest she should draw it too quickly, even when she is righteously distempered? Who, when a wild desire cries for satisfaction, has the habit of turning it out of doors? Who, when life is dull and a fresh pleasure offers itself, restrains himself until clear answers are given to these questions: 'Is this right in the eyes of love? Will it sow sorrow in some soul or disturb some life?' It is wise, even at the risk of checking noble impulse, to ask these questions now, when self-indulgence is so much the mistress of society, or the mistress of our own lonely self-devouring heart."

This well-known preacher and author was a great exponent of the power of Love; by which he meant universal love, free from all passion — Harmony, Brotherhood, Altruism; the antithesis and conqueror of selfishness, of passion, of fear, and of the whole brood of our baser nature. In the above quotation he is certainly loyal to his ideal: no sparing, no fond compromises. Passion is passion, however attractively dressed up. So long as self-love is in the cup, that cup is poisoned, be its savor howsoever sweet. He shows a knowledge of the psychology of the human breast — how it deceives itself by finding plausible justification for beloved desires.

It is our great pitfall to mistake the personality for the real Self; and, in trying to assert the latter, merely to assert the former. Such mistakes will generally yield before the following test: those 'noble impulses,' for which, in ourselves, we demand worship and gratification, — are we prepared to grant a similar freedom to the like impulses of all and sundry? What may seem holy in ourself may seem quite ugly in somebody else!

It takes some strength to "turn a wild desire out of doors," does it not? The trouble often is that we merely send it away for awhile, or drive it temporarily out of sight; while keeping it on a string, so to say. Or, to vary the metaphor, we do not extirpate the head or the seed, so that it can grow again, or present itself in some new dress. The secret of success is to have some higher ideal, with which the wild desire is incompatible; and then the desire will languish through the transference of our affections elsewhere. This man, Stopford Brooke, had his own higher ideal, for which he strove, on which he modeled his life.

Desires are the thieves of the heart, as symbolized by the figure of the snake crawling up the altar and stealing the sacrifice. Therefore by turning them out of doors, we preserve what they would steal. Is a desire something we want, or is it something that wants us? Looking back at past desires from which we are now free, we can realize the joy of freedom.

The word 'temperance,' as used in the quotation, means something more than physical abstinence — something more important and efficacious. It means mental and emotional temperance. 'Unbridled thinking' — how many of us permit our thoughts to roam over seductive paths, lulling ourselves to imagine that all is well so long as we refrain

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from outward action! But thoughts are the prolific parents of acts to be born. Our dreams are apt to materialize suddenly any day. We need to build us more spacious mansions and let in the air and light; that we may entertain those thought-guests which shall become the parents of worthy acts. A truly temperate man is not a morbidly repressed man; but a man in whom unhealthy cravings can find no lodgment, by reason of his healthy activity. So, in our mental life, if we can realize that unwarrantable desires are consuming fires, or canker-worms that feed on our vitality, we may find ourselves able to soar aloft out of the regions where they hover.

Emancipation from outworn ideals and customs does not spell freedom, unless at the same time we can escape the tyranny of our own wayward caprices and strong propensities. Freedom from *all* law is mere madness and chaos; if we give up our old allegiances, it must only be that we may be loyal to a higher and nobler obligation. Changes must come over the face of society; but people can be kept secure through those changes by loyalty to the dictates of their higher nature—to that Moral Law which is unchanging and universal because it has its sanction in the veritable facts concerning human nature. This is what is meant by the writer, when he proclaims his law of Love, as opposed to the law of self-seeking. The Law of man's Divine nature is one of subordination of the personal self to that Higher Self which knows no separateness.



“THERE is much that goes to show that our heathen forefathers had a widespread belief in the *transmigration* [reincarnation] of souls. The soul of the deceased could take its abode in a new-born child and live another life. Those human beings thus reborn are called in the old sources *endrbornir*, ‘born again.’ Helgi, Hjorvarth’s son, and the Valkyr Svafa were *endrbornir*. Of the renowned Helgi, Hunding’s Bane, a prose piece in the Elder Edda relates: ‘The belief prevailed in ancient times that people became *endrbornir*, but now it is called old wives’ talk. Also about Helgi and Sigrun, it was said that they were born again.’ Saint Olaf was, after the opinion of people, one born again from a traditional-historical king, *Olaf Geirstahaalf*, who received sacrifice. To the belief in being born again was perhaps attached originally the custom of naming a child after one deceased in order that the one concerned might be born again in the little child who bears the dead person’s name.”—PROFESSOR MORTENSEN in *Norse Legends*

## THE "BODHICHARYÂVATÂRA," POEM BY ŚÂNTIDEVA AND THE DOCTRINE OF ŚŪNYATÂ OR "EMPTINESS"

H. A. FUSSELL



CERTAIN books, as, for instance, the *Confessions* of Augustine, and *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, have, over and above their literary value, special significance as expressions of the deepest spiritual life known to Western nations. The noblest minds of Christendom have found in them inspiration "to lead the life," encouragement and power to overcome their passional nature, and are accustomed to use their language to express their highest aspirations. Even non-religious earnest natures - to whom *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius* are more congenial --- have felt their charm, while rejecting the dogmas which their authors imagine form the basis of our moral life. The power which these books possess is due to the fact that they are not merely moral disquisitions, but that each is the portrait of a human soul with all its propensities to evil, its failures and successes in the attempt to lead a life free from blame, and to attain to communion with the divine source of our being.

Within the last hundred and fifty years, however, other books of devotion, with a deeper insight into the eternal verities, have been made accessible to Western readers. The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* and *The Voice of the Silence* appeal to an ever-increasing number of truth-seekers. The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* has been called "the pearl of the Hindû Scriptures," and *The Voice of the Silence* is a selection of Precepts by the Masters of Wisdom for the daily use of Lanoos (Disciples), which H. P. Blavatsky learned by heart when she was living in the Extreme Orient. "The Few," to whom this little book is dedicated, are, I suppose, those *practical* mystics who have really entered upon the Path of Self-Mastery in the pursuit of knowledge, not for themselves alone, but in order to be better able to help and save "suffering humanity."

A book of the kind we are considering is the *Bodhicharyâvatâra*, an introduction to the path to be followed by the Bodhisattvas, or aspirants for Buddhahood. The well-known Orientalist, A. Barth, compares it to the *Imitation of Christ*, for it breathes the same humble renunciation and ardent charity. What the *Imitation* is to Christians, that the *Bodhicharyâvatâra* is to Buddhists, giving valuable counsels for the development of the spiritual life. It became extremely popular, and was the daily meditation of many thousands of Buddhists in Central Asia and the Far East during the seventh and eighth centuries of our era.

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Just as Augustine wrote his *Confessions* in order to awaken devotion in his own heart and in the hearts of “fellow-pilgrims of the Way,” so Śântideva says:

“I write this book solely for the sanctification of my own heart”; [adding however], “it may be of use to others, similar to myself, should they happen to read it, . . . for while meditating on what I desire to write, the current of my purified thought sets more strongly towards good. . . . If it were not for the thought of *bodhi* [enlightenment], what virtue could overcome the power of sin?”

Our author belongs to the Mādhyamika school of Nâgârjuna, a most subtil metaphysician, equally remarkable for the saintliness of his life and the hardihood of his philosophical thoughts, generally regarded as the elaborator of the doctrine of *śūnyatâ* (emptiness, or the void). Born 223 B. C. in Berar, Central India, he went after his conversion to Buddhism as a missionary to China, where he gained many adherents. By the end of the third century, Buddhism had spread over the whole country, and in 625 A. D. the Buddhist monk Eikwan introduced the Mādhyamika teachings into Japan and founded the Sanron sect of Japanese Buddhism. These teachings are largely ‘negative,’ and some modern scholars, though erroneously in the opinion of the Buddhists, regard them as a form of philosophic nihilism. As we shall see later, the Yogâchârya school gives a positive and spiritual interpretation of the doctrine of the void, more in harmony with the Theosophic teachings. The importance of this school can hardly be overestimated, for H. P. Blavatsky, when asked whether the Esoteric philosophy taught the same doctrines as the Yogâchârya school, replied: “Not quite.”<sup>1</sup> She calls it “a school of pure Buddhism, neither northern nor southern”; and no wonder, for it was founded by Âryasanga, a direct disciple of the Buddha; much of its teaching was esoteric.

We have already mentioned the likeness of much in Śântideva’s poem to the *Imitation of Christ*, but it is important to note that in Śântideva there is nothing of the quietism and self-depreciation so characteristic of Thomas à Kempis. On the contrary, the aspirant for Bodhisattvaship is self-reliant, confident, a man of action, bent solely on attaining illumination, and indefatigable in unselfish service for humanity. We must not forget, either, that Buddhism was once a great missionary religion.

“Go forth,” said the Buddha to his disciples, “your hearts overflowing with compassion, as teachers in a world torn by suffering, and in every place where reigns the darkness of ignorance, light there a torch.”—*Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*

In verse four of his poem, Śântideva exclaims:

“How difficult it is to attain that blessed state in which all the conditions of temporal

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1. *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, London, England.

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happiness as well as of deliverance are united — that state in which a man may realize his destiny. If he does not work out his deliverance, it will be a long time before he finds so favorable an opportunity again."

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (vi, 40-42) Krishna says:

"Never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good. The man whose devotion has been broken off by death goeth to the regions of the righteous, . . . and is then born again on earth in a pure and fortunate family; or even in a family of those who are spiritually illuminated. But such a rebirth into this life as this last is more difficult to obtain."

It is a striking parallel. Śāntideva continues:

"This pearl which is the thought of enlightenment has been tested and recognised as very precious by the wise who lead the caravan of humanity. Take then this pearl, O ye who go from existence to existence in this world. . . . Even if a man has committed the most terrible sins, he will overcome them if he takes refuge in the thought of enlightenment. . . . One thing, however, is the taking of the vow to find enlightenment; the following of the path that leads thereto is another and altogether more difficult. The vow is to be taken for the purpose of bringing deliverance to all creatures in the universe, by a soul incapable of turning back, with the firm resolve to accomplish this divine mission, even as Avalokiteśvara refused to enter Nirvāna before having saved all creatures. . . . As I have nothing to offer to the Buddhas of Compassion but myself, I renounce the self. I give myself to them without reserve. Take possession of me, O sublime Beings! Then I shall have nothing more to fear here below, I shall be diligent in the service of others, and shall commit no more sin. . . . I take refuge in all the Buddhas, past, present and future, in the Law, and in the Community.<sup>2</sup> The sins I have stupidly committed myself, through carelessness, through attachment or aversion,<sup>3</sup> or have caused others to commit, were done in order to get what seemed pleasant or to avoid what seemed hard to endure. My friends, my enemies, bodily existence, everything, will pass away and disappear like a dream; only merit can save me, and that friend I have neglected. In bodily sickness one does not dare disobey the physician; but, O what height of folly! I have despised and disregarded the words of that omniscient physician who is able to cure all ills, whether of soul or body. . . . But now my soul desires deliverance, and not mine own only, but that of all creatures. I will be a protector of those who have none, a guide, a boat for those who desire to reach the other shore,<sup>4</sup> or a bridge, a lamp for those who are in darkness. . . . Thus may I, in every way possible, in all the immensity of the world, contribute to the life of all that is,— as long as any creature has not found deliverance. . . . I do not know by what miracle the thought of enlightenment has been born in me; it is the Good Law that has given it to me, and I invite all creatures to share in it. . . ."

"Having, then, obtained firm hold of the thought of *bodhi* [enlightenment], I must henceforth, without fail, endeavor not to violate any of the rules [of the Bodhisattvas]. I have made a vow [to attain enlightenment for the sake of all creatures]; if I do not fulfil it, if I disappoint them, what a terrible destiny am I not preparing for myself! . . . That is why failure on the part of the Bodhisattva is so grave, for if he fails he jeopardizes their salvation. . . . Why then, buffeted about in the course of earthly existences, now held back by the

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2. All Buddhists take refuge in the Buddha; — in the Law (*dharma*), conceived of as the expression of the Buddha-mind; — in the Community (*sangha*), its earthly representative. As M. Anesaki says: "One takes refuge in the Buddha, in order to take refuge in himself (*atta-sarana*), as the Master has done."— *Buddhist Ethics and Morality*, p. 2

3. The three causes of sin are, according to Buddhism: (1) Inattention; evil comes from unguarded thought. (2) Attachment to objects; and (3) Aversion from objects; that is why it is necessary to cultivate equal-mindedness or detachment.

4. That is, Nirvāṇa, in which there is freedom from the round of births and deaths.

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weight of my sins, now impelled onward by the force of the thought of enlightenment, do I delay the conquest of holiness? This very day I must strive to conquer my lower nature, or I shall sink lower and lower. The deliverance of all men will be delayed, and through my fault. . . . Capable of becoming good and doing good today, why do I delay? My lusts and evil passions are the cause. Why am I a slave to them? Because I have allowed myself to dwell upon them in thought, and that is why they overcome me unawares. In order to be able to deliver others, I must first deliver myself. . . . The sole cause of my slavery is absence of effort, faintheartedness, and lack of attention. In thought I have dreamt of riches, glory, honor, homage of all kinds. I have been envious of other men's good, desirous only of my own. Henceforth, free from doubt and error, compassionate, firm, obedient to the rules and to the Teachers, master of my senses and passions, I will guard my thought, firm as Mount Meru, from all thought of self. I shake off languor and indolence, and in order to have nothing more to dread, I fix my thought on the Good Law, withdrawing it from all evil ways, applying it to what ought to be its sole object, the attainment of enlightenment and the salvation of all creatures. . . ."

Thus far I have sketched Śântideva's conception of the spiritual life almost entirely in his own words and at some length, for no translation of the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* exists easily accessible to English readers. I have followed mainly the excellent French translation by Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1907) from the Sanskrit, checked by references to the Tibetan version and commentaries. As might be expected from Śântideva's attitude towards life, there is no false piety in his poem. Though spiritual life is impossible without meditation, he insists again and again that 'ecstatic contemplation' must never be indulged in at the expense of duty to one's neighbor, the service of others being the first and last rule to be observed by him who takes the Bodhisattva-vow, which is strictly in accord with Theosophic teaching. As William Q. Judge says:

"Unselfish service, altruism in all things, is the demand made by the Masters of Compassion on all who seek to qualify themselves for chelaship. THERE IS NO OTHER ROAD."

And in order that there may be no misconception of what duty is, H. P. Blavatsky thus defines it:

"Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity — to our fellow-men, neighbors, family — and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of duty."

— *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 225

There are many interesting parallels between Śântideva's thoughts and those of other spiritual teachers, some of which our readers will already have noticed. We will only mention two. He says:

"Many are the friends and enemies that I have had; they have passed out of my life leaving only the sins of which they were the occasion."

Augustine, speaking of the power of suggestion, exclaims:

"O friendship, worse than the deepest enmity, unfathomable betrayer of souls! Merely because someone says, 'Come, let us do this or that,' we are ashamed not to be shameless."

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All true Christians have been heartened and encouraged by Paul’s admonition in *Hebrews*, xii, 1-2:

“Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”

Hear now Śântideva:

“There are around me, witnesses of every moment of my life, sublime Beings who might enter Nirvāna if they would, but who prefer to remain [invisible] on earth for my salvation and for the salvation of all men.”

We do not need to wonder at these parallels nor at the similarity of language, for the Path is one, and all go through essentially the same experiences, in one life or another.

The *anatta* doctrine that there is no ‘self’—is a fundamental principle of Buddhism, and, as we might expect, the term ‘Higher Self’ does not occur in Buddhist nomenclature, though isolated phrases are found such as: “Self is the lord of self”; and, “A man who controls himself enters into the untrodden land through his own self-controlled self” (*Dharmapada*, 160, 323). The idea is there nevertheless, and is sufficiently well represented by the *bodhichitta*, or the ‘Buddha-mind,’ which is latent in all beings and is the cause of all advance in spirituality. Impersonal and eternal, it needs to be awakened and realized by mental purification; when fully active, enlightenment takes place. And so Katherine Tingley says to all students of the Higher Wisdom:

“I have you meditated on that Higher Self to which you aspire? This thought and meditation is the first step to an understanding of the real nature of the inner and outer man. It clarifies your whole being, unloading and separating from you much that you have hitherto thought to be yourself, helping you to an understanding of the valuelessness of much that you have hitherto desired and perhaps thought necessary to your welfare or peace of mind; separating the chaff from the wheat in consciousness, conferring added power of insight into human nature, and discrimination in your dealings with men.” — *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*, p. 31

Śântideva runs through the whole gamut of Buddhist virtues, emphasizing especially the necessity for Patience or Forbearance (*kshānti*); Strength or Exertion (*vīrya*) — which H. P. Blavatsky defines as “dauntless courage that fights its way to supernal truth”; and Meditation (*dhyāna*); one of the principal subjects recommended by our author for meditation is “the non-differentiation of one’s self from one’s neighbor.” The remainder of the poem is highly metaphysical and polemical in tone; Śântideva defends the Mādhyamika interpretation of the ‘void,’ attacks that of the Yogāchārya-school in so far as it differs from his own, and states his reasons for rejecting the metaphysical entity, known as the ‘ego,’ of the Sankhyas and Vedāntists.

Briefly stated, the doctrine of the void is as follows. The *skandhas*

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and elements which make up man and the universe are not only continually breaking up and reforming according to the law of Karma, but are themselves perpetually disintegrating and reintegrating, so that nothing is left but a ceaseless ever-changing stream of life which wells up as consciousness in an unending series of transient groupments, for ever appearing and disappearing like the rising and falling of the waves of the sea. Nothing is, everything is becoming. The *anatta* doctrine has been thought out to its logical conclusion. The phenomenal world is *mâyâ*, illusion, and anything beyond can only have conceptual existence. And behind it, all is empty and void (*sarvam śūnyam*).

What the Buddha really taught was, that all things both *are* and *are not*, that is, they have relative existence (*Samyutta-Nikâya*, ii, 17). On all questions concerning absolute being he kept a profound silence, as his conversation with Mâlunkyâputta proves. The latter had asked:

“Is the world eternal or is it limited? Will the perfect Buddha continue to live after death? It does not seem to me right that these questions should remain unanswered. Let the Buddha deign to answer them if he can.”

“The Buddha began: ‘Did I promise you, when you entered the Community, that I would teach you whether the world is or is not eternal, limited or infinite, whether the saints live or do not after death?’

“Mâlunkkâputta was obliged to confess that the Buddha had not.

“Then the Buddha continued: ‘Why do I not teach these things to my disciples? Because the knowledge of them does not conduce to progress in Sainthood, because they do not subserve either Peace or Illumination. The Buddha teaches his disciples the truth about suffering and deliverance from suffering. That is why the things you ask have not been revealed. Let that which has not been revealed remain unrevealed.’”— *The Śâta-Mâlunkya-sūtra*.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless the Buddha did give his disciples glimpses of ultimate reality, of which nothing can be predicated except that it *is*. For example, in the *Udâna* we read:

“There is, O disciples, a state, where there is neither earth nor water, neither light nor air, neither infinity of space, nor infinity of reason, nor absolute void, nor the coextinction of perception and non-perception, neither this world nor that world. That, O disciples, I term neither going nor standing, neither death nor birth. It is without basis, without procession, without cessation. It is the end of sorrow. . . .

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5. From this passage and a few others of like import many modern scholars have concluded that the Buddha never taught anything *esoterically*. This is very far from the truth, as the Buddha's own words in the *Saddharma-Pundarika* prove: “Knowledge is difficult to understand. Were fools to be given it suddenly they would become confused, and in their greater folly would rave and go mad. I speak according to the capacity of understanding of each person; with the help of a dual meaning I prepare theories.” This and other passages which might be quoted prove that the Buddha did *withhold knowledge* from those not prepared to receive it. H. P. Blavatsky, who had access to records unknown to our Orientalists, says that this great Teacher, Gautama-Buddha, “reserved the hidden Truths,” concerning the mystery of Being, . . . “for a select circle of his Arhats. The latter received their Initiation at the famous Saptaparna cave . . . near Mount Baibhâr . . . in Râjagriha.” — *The Secret Doctrine*, I, p. xxi



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“There is, O disciples, an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. Were there not, O disciples, this unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no possible exit from this world of the born, originated, created, formed.”

“The voidness alone is self-existent and perfect,” is a Buddhist saying. Compare this with the statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 42):

“Non Ego, Voidness, and Darkness are Three in One and alone Self-existent and perfect.”

It is evident, from the use of the term ‘void,’ not only in the above citations, but everywhere else in this article, that it does not mean mere emptiness, vacuity, which is the meaning given to it in our dictionaries. The word ‘abstract,’ in its philosophical sense, comes nearer to the oriental conception of *śūnyatā*, as is plain from a careful consideration of its use, especially since what is abstract requires a concrete imbodiment to become manifest, in much the same way as a righteous man may be said to be an imbodiment of righteousness.

“Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) does not always mean relativity or phenomenality, but often absoluteness and transcendentality. When Buddhists declare all things to be empty, they are not advocating a nihilistic view; on the contrary they are assuming an ultimate reality *which cannot be subsumed in the categories of logic*. With them, to proclaim the conditionality of things is to assert the existence of something altogether unconditioned and transcendent of all determination. *Śūnyatā* may thus often be most appropriately rendered by the Absolute.”

— *The Eastern Buddhist*, September-December, 1922

In the *Prajñā-pāramitā-hridaya-sūtra* (Tibetan version) we read:

“Adoration to the Prajñāpāramitā, which is beyond words, thought, and praise, whose self-nature is, like unto space, neither created nor destroyed, which is a state of wisdom and morality *evident to our inner consciousness*, and which is the mother of all Excellent Ones of the past, present, and future.”— *Ibid.*

Let us now see what the Theosophic teaching is.

“The Secret Doctrine establishes three fundamental propositions: —

“(a) An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE . . . beyond the range and reach of thought . . .

“(b) The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically ‘the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing,’ . . .

“(c) The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, . . . and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or ‘Necessity’) in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. In other words, no purely spiritual Buddhi (divine Soul) can have an independent (conscious) existence before the spark which issued from the pure Essence of the Universal Sixth principle — or the OVER-SOUL — has (a) passed through every elemental form of the phenomenal world of that Manvantara, and (b) acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest archangel (Dhyāni-Buddha). . . .” — *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 14-17

All religions are but adumbrations or elaborations of these three fundamental propositions, and their truth or falsity must be judged by reference to them; for, as Katherine Tingley says: “Theosophy is the

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inner life in every religion. It is no new religion, but is as old as Truth itself.”<sup>6</sup>

*The Secret Doctrine* also teaches that

“it is only through a vehicle of matter that consciousness wells up as ‘I am I,’ a physical basis being necessary to focus a ray of the Universal Mind at a certain stage of complexity. . . .

“The ‘Manifested Universe,’ therefore, is pervaded by duality, which is, as it were, the very essence of its EX-istence as ‘manifestation.’ But just as the opposite poles of subject and object, spirit and matter, are but aspects of the One Unity in which they are synthesized, so, in the manifested Universe, there is ‘that’ which links spirit to matter, subject to object.”— I, pp. 15-16

Bearing these teachings of the Ancient Wisdom in mind, let us now turn to a consideration of the Yogâchârya interpretation of the void. The Mâdhyamika school stressed, as we have seen, the transitoriness and the impermanence of all things; its conclusions were somewhat vague and negative. The Yogâchârya school, on the other hand, being nearer to the Esoteric Philosophy, with its doctrine of the *Alaya-vijñâna*, neither matter nor spirit, but the root of both — essentially the same as the *Bhûta-tathâtâ*, or permanent reality, of Âryasanga — gave a positive content to the idea of the void (*śûnyatâ*) by linking with it the complementary idea of fulness (*aśûnyatâ*),<sup>7</sup> a state in which “the pure soul manifests itself as eternal, permanent, completely comprising all things that are pure.” The Yogâchâryas taught, moreover, that Alaya is also the self of an advanced Adept.<sup>8</sup> In this aspect it may be likened to the *bodhichitta*, the Buddha-mind, already mentioned, and which, if allowed to become the dominating factor in his life, will lead a man to Buddhahood, for it is latent in all men. All this is in complete accord with Theosophic teaching. In *The Voice of the Silence* we read:

“Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them!

“Behold, how like the moon, reflected in the tranquil waves, Alaya is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent! . . .

“Look inward: thou art Buddha. . . .

“All is impermanent in man, except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. . . .”

One reason why the complete Alaya-doctrine was largely esoteric is that it was liable to be misunderstood, for all men are subject to the illusion, at least in the elementary stages of thought about themselves,

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6. See also Manual No. XV, *Theosophy, the Mother of Religions*.

7. Compare with “the voidness of the seeming full, the fullness of the seeming void.”  
— *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 72

8. Cf. *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 48.

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that they are distinct personalities, and therefore would identify Alaya with their own limited personality, mistaking it for their immortal part. In the *Mahâyâna-Abhidharma*, the Buddha describes Alaya

"as existing from eternity to eternity and forming the foundation of all things, without which no paths are possible, nor is there any attainment of Nirvâna. This *Vijñâna* supports and sustains everything, is a storehouse where all the germs of existence are stowed away. *This I preach only to the higher men.*"

This idea of Alaya as the Repository or Storehouse in which are contained the seeds of future existences is a very important feature of the Yogâchârya-teaching. So long as man is not free from selfish impulses and desires, these seeds are, in the language of the school, "defiled or contaminated," and there is no escape from *samsâra*, the round of births and deaths, which are conditioned by his Karma. When however he has, through lives of service to his fellow-men, got rid of "the great dire heresy of separateness," and become the imbodiment of universal love and righteousness, there is no more "soiled-mind-consciousness" (*kliṣṭo-mano-vijñâna*) to produce Karma. Though no longer subject to rebirth, the now perfected Bodhisattva, out of compassion for humanity, refuses the Nirvâna which is his by right, in order to remain on earth to help those less advanced than himself. For him Nirvâna is, in the picturesque language of Mahâyâna, "the Abodeless" (*Apratishṭhita-nirvâna*), for he has

"sacrificed the personal to SELF impersonal and destroyed the path between the two—*Antaskarana* (the lower *Manas*)."—*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 65

Such is the destiny of every human soul, and it is startling, even terrifying, when first presented to thought, for, as H. P. Blavatsky says: "To lose all sense of self implies the loss of all that ordinary men most value in themselves." That is why the *anatta*-doctrine of Buddhism is anathema to all those who believe in a personal God and in the survival of the personality after death, and why Nirvâna seems to them no better than annihilation. On the contrary,

"Nirvâna is not annihilation, is not death, but life; it is the right way of living, to be obtained by the conquest of all the passions that becloud the mind. Nirvâna is the rest in activity, the tranquillity of a man who has risen above himself and has learned to view life in its eternal aspects."—PAUL CARUS, *Buddhism and its Christian Critics*

The Secret Doctrine teaches that there is

"One homogeneous ðivine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE . . . It is the omnipresent Reality: impersonal, because it contains all and everything. . . . It is latent in every atom in the Universe, and is the Universe itself."—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 273

We are lacking in insight, therefore, if we do not see reality everywhere, or, more strictly speaking, degrees of reality, for the nearer anything is to the One Substance-Principle, the more real it is. The Yogâchâryas

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liken the *bhûta-tathâtâ* to the ocean, and all phenomenal things to its waves, but the One Reality (*bhûta-tathâtâ*) is inherent in all transient things, just as the water of the ocean is inherent in the waves, which are for ever appearing and disappearing.

This being so, what does it behoove every disciple, every truth-seeker, to do?

“To live in the realities of life! That is what all students should aim to do.”

— KATHERINE TINGLEY, *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic*

To conclude with one more quotation from H. P. Blavatsky, who brought the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom to the West in the last quarter of the nineteenth century:

“Of teachers there are many; the MASTER-SOUL is one, Alaya, the Universal Soul. Live in that MASTER as Its ray in thee. Live in thy fellows as they live in IT.”

— *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 64

ADDENDUM. Some of our readers will doubtless ask our reasons for saying that the truth or falsity of all religions must be determined by reference to what Theosophists call the WISDOM-RELIGION. To guard against any misunderstanding, however, we must first say that Theosophists reverence all great religions, seeking only to disentangle the truth which they all contain from the error with which it is too often overlaid. The answer to our question can be best given in the words of H. P. Blavatsky herself.

“The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages. . . . It is the uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity.”— *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 272

### MEN SAID

F. M. PIERCE

MEN said to men: “There is no Christ!”  
Then turned to their markets where souls are priced;  
This Christos in them bartered and sold;  
This All-Divine exchanged for gold —  
This part of Deity in man,  
This son of God through all time’s span.  
These all, the One: the Christ denied.  
The God, who’ll raise men deified.

*International Theosophical Headquarters,  
Point Loma, California*

## RUSSIAN MYSTICISM AND SOME OF ITS CAUSES

BORIS DE ZIRKOFF

**I**F two cultured Russians happen to meet one another, no matter what be the place or the circumstances of this meeting — reception-hall, train, theater, hunting-grounds, or a foreign water-resort,— and if they feel themselves in a certain mental disposition, you may be perfectly sure that they will launch at once into the most abstract discussions, and develop the most metaphysical theories on the future of European civilization, or on the immortality of the human soul, or on the existence of such a being as God. In fact, it is not exclusively the privilege of a *cultured* Russian. It is a characteristic of the Russian nation as a whole, and of every one of its individuals in particular. If you happen to ask any Russian -- from the first peasant you will see perched sidewise on his four-wheeled truck and driving melancholically through the endless village along something that is called in Russia 'a road' (but is in reality for everybody else the picture of the most gloomy desolation), and plunged hours in and hours out in a semi-conscious state of mind defined in his tongue as 'dreaming' (but not thinking), to the representative of the very cream of Russian society you meet during his hours of rest or meditation -- if you ask them both about the subject-matter of their respective 'dreaming' or 'thinking,' you will learn that it was either about Christ or the Antichrist, about the end of the world or the beginning of it, about the mermaid that tickled to death last night a lad of the village near the great river, or (if the man was a somewhat learned fellow) the strange hint on the Buddhistic Nirvâna that occurred in the address of the High Priest in the Temple last Sunday.

If you think that the first (the peasant) will meditate about the outcome of the crop, or the best way of improving his house, or let his wife be unbeaten at least for one day; and the second one (the representative of society) about a brilliant social affair, or his business, you will have greatly mistaken the case. Such matters are entirely improper for thinking. They are unworthy that special occupation which the Russian calls 'stirring the brains.'

Why is it so? The problem is a difficult one, indeed. The present few lines will endeavor to elucidate the character of the religious sentiment of Russian people, and try to give a glimpse of its inner life and consciousness.

Whether it is on account of the youth of Russian civilization when

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compared with the other countries of Europe, and its relatively short acquaintance with what is known as the 'Christian Church,' or owing to some peculiar conditions of development and evolution, or to definite surrounding circumstances, is very difficult to say, but the fact is that with the Russian people --- meaning not only the peasant (who forms, it is true, ninety-seven per cent. of the entire population) but the workingman, the poor townsman, and the city merchant --- religious feeling has retained its pristine simplicity and directness, its character of long ago, and the colorful traits by which it reminds us of the so-called 'heathendom' in which the Slavonic tribes lived only ten centuries ago. The peasant of Russia seems to exist in a certain stage of evolution at which every conception that arises in his mind spontaneously assumes a religious form.

If this stage of development existed in other countries of the West, it has long since disappeared, and has left no tangible proofs of its existence. Religion as a sentiment, not as a mere compilation of certain dogmas and established artificial frames, is the most important factor in the life of the peasant of Russia (and we will continue to speak mainly about the *peasant*, as it is *the only* element which can be considered as belonging to the pure Slavic race). This religious feeling permeating every action and deed of every-day life and playing the rôle of a background, as it were, on which the whole gamut of emotions, sentiments, and thoughts uprolls itself day in and day out, holds a broad and significant place in the consciousness of every individual and of the nation as a whole. Perhaps even the harshness of the soil, the difficulties of a severe climate, the vicissitudes of history, the form of government throughout long centuries, and the peculiar state of culture, have strengthened the religious keynote and uphold its influence.

Remembering once more the famous question of Rousseau, whether civilization had corrupted humanity, and the definition and explanation given by him, we may notice in passing that, even if so-called civilization, as it is understood in the West, has not turned to the worst all the faculties and inclinations of the Western nations, it has at least corrupted and nearly killed the so-called 'religious' sentiment. *This is just what has never occurred in Russia.* A thousand years of history have not changed in an appreciable way the nation's *intellectual age*, as it was at the very dawn of the 'Christian civilization,' which was for Russia the civilization of Byzantium. Russia has just reached adolescence, and all the various and multifarious beliefs of its long childhood are still the most important factors in its thought-life, and retain their unimpaired authority. Needless to say that these 'childish beliefs' are but the last remnants of a period of 'heathendom,' and that, luckily, these very beliefs form an

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essential element of the inner consciousness of the Russian people.

Like the great, endless rivers of our infinite lands, the centuries in Russia seem to have a slower flow. There are people and even whole provinces which live not only in the Middle Ages, but truly in that wonderful time of paganism when every atom of Nature was endowed with the spark of life. Even if nature-worship in its most pure and real form is gradually receding from our century, yet the spirit of the Middle Ages, with all its mysticism for the searching mind, is a factor of every-day life in Russia, though it is mingled with a certain Asiatic element; the splendor and richness of the Orient and this Middle-Age touch of culture forming together one of the most fascinating effects on anyone who is willing to plunge into the real spirit of Russia.

What can be more important to the Russian peasant than the belief in the 'supernatural,' in the mysterious and the unknown? It seems as if it were the only lever capable of lifting the slumbering energies and hidden potencies of his soul. He lives in a world of visions and apparitions. He expects all around him, at every moment of his life, that something strange and wonderful will happen. *His is the most mystical nature we know of.* His faith in the invisible and superhuman is stronger than his sufferings and his misery. — Look at the old town of Kief when thousands and thousands of people, peasants, beggars, workingmen, tramps, and merchants come once a year to see the old catacombs, the somber galleries of one of the oldest shrines of Russia. Look at their faces, at the features of these human beings. Tired and exhausted, the fever in their visionary eyes, thin like living skeletons, barefooted, a bag on the shoulder, a stick in the hand, they come on foot from the icy plains of Siberia, they come from the virgin forests of the north, they flow from the Ural Mountains, they pour forth from the Black Sea shores; and there they stand, day and night, weeks sometimes, awaiting the moment when they shall be able to visit the goal of their pilgrimage, and invoke what every one of them believes to be God. Is it a picture of the twentieth century or is it the image in miniature of Benares?

Is it blind fanaticism of the so-called 'mass,' or is it the rooted belief that *there are* still, in that unknown Russia, living men who know the secrets of a gradually disappearing old religion and practise white magic? What is the reason that all these innumerable people come like a river of human beings to the old shrines of the old city? Is it because its wall hides men, known all over Russia for their wonderful wisdom? They may belong to the Greek Orthodox Church; they may recognise (for the time being) the dogmas of an established priesthood; even more than that, they may be themselves High-Priests of the secular shrine — what matters it for them? Is it the name that makes the man? Have we not

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heard on every corner of the great and sacred city, stories about strange deeds? And yet what are those beings? Are they adepts? No, we hardly believe so. They are what they stand for - *startsi*, or *old men*. And the title implies a still older wisdom. --- But this subject would bend our study in an entirely different direction.

The great power which lies in the depths of the peasant-soul is due mainly to the fact that it has never been touched by our barren skepticism. Seemingly coarse, this soul is nevertheless usually far less so than in the case of externally polished people.

The spirit of negation, that shadow of death, which tries to cover the present generation and kill its divine fire, has not withered the noblest and loftiest faculties of the heart of Russia. Why? *Simply because Russia is several generations behind the time*, and this is, to our thinking, its hope and merit, strange as it might sound.

If we consider one nation after another (meaning Europe), and compare their popular beliefs and religious feelings, we will be able to note that *Russia is the only European country where man has not lost the sense of the invisible*, where he truly feels himself, all the time of his life, in touch with the powers (personified or not) of the unseen world. 'Faith' in the invisible world has been always strong and perhaps even never so strong as it is now. But this faith was not a blind one. It was rather a subconscious 'knowledge' of the truth and reality of the object believed in. In his poor, miserable life, brought about by different causes as well historical as national and racial, this 'faith' or that 'knowledge' of a superior and of an inferior world was to him the great comforter, the great promise of compensation, for what he could not reach or possess in this earthly life. The harder this life was, the more he lived in a world of his own.

Thus we see that, although originated in the *pre-Christian* world-conception left behind by the receding faith of old, this belief in the existence of mysterious and unknown forces and worlds which form as it were the *natural religion* of Russia, has been even strengthened by the prevailing circumstances of a difficult life.

The racial characteristic and the historical influence extend to the cultured classes, this drop in the ocean of the nation. The skepticism and the spirit of negation which, proceeding from Europe, have touched those upper elements of the race, have combined with the natural inclinations of the Slavic soul, and, leaving it for the most part devoid of real spiritual satisfaction and happiness, have implanted, or rather developed out of an existing nucleus, the peculiar strain of melancholy that pervades it, the disappointment with a 'civilization' that does not come up to its standard, and has been the cause of their desperate effort to grasp a new



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faith yet to be born. We see this in the Russian literature, that strange advertising of suffering, misery, and wrecked hopes. It is out of these unuttered and almost inexpressible sensations of a race which feels a new and brighter future vibrating in the depths of its consciousness, that proceed the sudden and pathetic beatings of captive wings which startle us in the literary productions of Russia, where faith and trust shine through the veil of unbelief, where feeling usually survives its object, and the forces of a hid and powerful self try to reach out into the wide world.

Although the racial mysticism and the inherent religious sentiment of Russian people are the remnants of the primeval religion of that race, unimpaired by the Christian Church and the direct influence of Byzantium during several centuries, they have yet two other causes which ought to be noticed.

The first is strongly connected with the original faith of the Slavs, and consists in their blood-relation to the great Aryan stock. It is thus in their own veins that the Slavonic race has the inheritance of Oriental mysticism and intensity of religious feeling. Some have shown, or have tried to show, the likeness which exists between the Russian genius and that of the Hindû, between the beliefs of the Great-Russian peasants and some of the oldest traditions of Buddhism. However, this likeness is not so prominent that we could draw out of it any positive conclusions as to the origin of the Slavonic race and its primitive dwelling-place. In fact, we can only notice that there is in many a way a certain similarity of conceptions between the Russian peasant and the people of the Orient. No wonder, if the Slavs are the descendants of the old Aryan, though largely mixed with Finno-Ugrian elements. The great similarity of the Old-Slavonic tongue (called also Old-Bulgarian and Church-Slavonic) with Sanskrit, is a good proof that the purity of Aryan blood is modified only in an insignificant degree.

But — and here we touch the second cause (by no means the lesser one) of the mystical trend of thought of Russia — we are able to notice that this mysticism is not expressed in the same way by the other nations belonging to the Slavonic stock. The Slavs of the Danube and the Elbe and those of south-eastern Europe, also in possession of a marked mystical instinct, have it more hid in their inner nature, on account of the difference of historical development.

The second cause referred to is the peculiar character of the land itself, on which the Eastern branch of the Slavs — the Russians — have settled since the very beginning of the present era. Were it not for the former racial unity with the Oriental nations and the original religion of their ancestors, this factor of physical surroundings and climate could have been the most important in the fashioning of the mystical touch in

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the character of a nation. And we know of many cases when people born in the West and fed on the theories of the greatest logicians and philosophers of Europe, have become real mystics and, even more than that, after a life spent in Russia; this change in their nature being chiefly due, as they say, "to the mysterious, boundless, and overwhelming space" of their adopted country, as well as to other of its characteristics.

If we are to sum up in one single word the impressions we receive from the physical characteristic of Russia, it would be that very word *space* that we should have to use. It is the boundless space in all directions that is so characteristic of the Russian landscape. It awakes the sense of the Infinite, as well as that of life's inanity; its immensity joined to the feeling of man's feebleness attunes the soul to melancholy, humility, retrospective meditation — and the result is mysticism.

The limitless plain has on the Russian a peculiar influence, perhaps in some way identical with that exerted on the Arab by the boundless desert. There are two different impressions produced on man by viewless space; and they depend upon his mood and temperament. One human being will be frightened, and feel himself small; he will shrink within himself and await some tragic event from the mighty hand of a superhuman power, the Spirit of Nature, which he feels beyond the all-embracing sky. Another one will long for a greater and freer life; he will merge into the vastness of that nature and feel himself a part of its grandeur and solemnity. Far from being small, he will have the idea of his greatness as a thinking being, able to cross in his thoughts the infinity of space and fix his attention on the Cause which gave birth to the vastness he sees before his eyes. These two contrary feelings are sometimes combined in the Russian peasant and have produced these two types, so peculiar to the Russian soil — the migrating, colonizing *muzhik*, and the Cozak, the wild son of the steppes, whose raids and liberty had no limits.

There is another type, too, directly originated by that feeling of man's smallness and insignificance before the majesty of space. It is the type that fills the ancient monasteries, or *skits*, of the northern forests and which fostered the endless dreams of the mystical sects of Great-Russia. The longing for freedom and wandering has been the fire which prompted the innumerable pilgrims to cover enormous distances on their way to the far-off shrines. They are always on the march from the remotest ends of the Empire, and form, as it were, a constant flow of migration forth and back on the infinite plains of 'holy Russia.' There are even sects of vagrants, for vagrantship is one of the forms which popular piety and unconscious mysticism are apt to take. So far, the influence of the open plains and steppes.

Turning to the north of Russia we see another feature of its wild

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nature — the wide-spread forests, sombre and untouched by men. Though changing in some way the inner impression made on the soul of the inhabitants, they too inspire the feeling of an infinite duration. The forest, like night, is mysterious and silent. Dreams haunt the breathing solitude of the woods. The vibrating silence of its fathomless depths, where the rays of sunshine hardly ever succeed in penetrating, inwraps the soul with deep solemnity and turns the stream of meditation inward, to the inner recesses of being. There is something in this very solemnity that makes you feel at one with the great flame of eternal life; and when the wind from the icy plains rushes overhead and the forest sighs and roars like so many breakers on the shore of an endless sea, you begin to feel freedom around you and try to follow the breath of the winds in their gigantic course and mighty sway in the sky of winter.

Take a look to the upper north, with its long, constant nights of the cold season, and its constant day of the summer months. The mysterious shudderings and mournful desolation of a winter-landscape, with the hosts of scintillating stars in the haunted splendor of a black-blue sky; the long June evenings, with their diaphanous gloaming, neither day nor night, and the feeling of something ethereal, immaterial, almost unreal — give both their seal to the soul of man, and awake in him the sense of the unknown and the so-called 'supernatural.'

Many other typical characteristics of nature and climate could be taken to account for the predisposition to mysticism in the Russian mind, but what has been said suffices to form a picture of the different possible causes of that phenomenon. Neither one nor any other of these causes is the most important nor the most essential. They all play a certain rôle in the fashioning of the mind, and give each one its respective part for the building up of that mysterious, inscrutable, and puzzling problem, which is the consciousness of the Russian peasant, and even that of every Russian, seen from the standpoint of foreign analysis.

It is by no means believed that we have said even the half of what might have been stated in reference to the present subject; this matter could be studied from all possible aspects and would fill a whole volume with the most interesting and fascinating researches. But we believe that we have given some few hints as to the causes of that peculiar religious sentiment which is so deeply ingrained in the character of the Russian. We are able now to answer, though in a very unsatisfactory way, the question why it is that when two Russians meet together they will attack at once the domain of the most abstract metaphysics and philosophies. Because, at the very moment when their mind is at rest and begins to withdraw from the outer world of impressions into the inner world of meditation, on any possible subject-matter that might for the

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time being occupy their intellect, there begins a certain *flow* through the open door of mind from the subconscious nature of their soul; a flow from what might be called the 'root-nature' of their whole organism. Being the basis, the fundamental corner-stone, of the soul, religious sentiment rises and fills their mind as soon as it is quiet enough to receive it; and this Russian mind, so puzzling for psychologists, is thus more or less a screen on which the most deep, rooted, inherent, vibrations of their being can imprint themselves and attain a certain degree of manifestation. The feeling thus dominates the intellect.

Religious conception of the Universe developing into mysticism is an almost unavoidable stage of evolution for a Russian. With him, mysticism is the end of every philosophical analysis of the world. It is astonishing to find it in Russia mixed up with instincts seemingly incompatible with it. It hovers over the land like a subtil haze. It permeates all and everything. Mature age seems to be more liable to it than youth. The greatest of our writers and thinkers, after a rather materialistic life, were, as it were, drowned in the ocean of mysticism, when they attained fifty. Take, for instance, Gogol and Tolstoy; they evolved and evolved till they both ended in deep mysticism.

A proof of the rôle played by nature in the development of mysticism is the fact that the latter is more strongly evolved by the peasant who stands nearer to nature and lives usually a semi-conscious life, deeply united with the flow of seasons, and the climatic peculiarities of the land. Russian mysticism is melancholic and mysterious; but it rarely falls into the stern asceticism of the East. It is not sombre or fierce, but gentle and compassionate. It is not an aimless drift "behind the clouds" as the Russian says, but is more or less practical and does not quit the earth. There is "a certain latent positivism, and often unconscious realism, which underlies the Russian character and shows through all coverings and disguises. It is this very union of contraries which gives originality to the national life; something unforeseen, puzzling, elusive, which lends such fascination to a study of Russians because it leaves always something to be discovered, some enigma to be solved."

These interesting contrasts are expressed in the innumerable sects of Russia, and it is their most striking keynote. In these sects we can follow the gradual development of the national, perhaps even racial, consciousness, and a study of their beliefs, rites, superstitions, ignorant heresies, and religious illuminism, forms therefore a curious chapter of psychology.

## CURRENT TOPICS

T. HENRY, M. A.

### ANTIQUITY OF CIVILIZATION



O frequently do we refer to the facts of archaeology in support of the Theosophical teachings, that it is possible old readers might weary of the subject. Yet we may plead in response that the occasions are made for us, rather than sought; and that there are the many new readers to be considered. This time we give a quotation from the London *Daily Telegraph* as follows:

“Every year the work of the archaeologists gives us vistas of a more remote past. From year to year we have to revise our ideas of the time which has passed since man learnt the skill to make his life more comfortable than that of the beasts. Now comes a report from Egypt that the Antiquities Department has discovered stone buildings, older than any yet known save the earliest Pyramids.

“Those who have seen the sights of Cairo may remember that close by the statues and mounds which are all that now remains of the magnificence of Memphis stands a strange pyramid built in five stages and in other curious ways unlike the others. It is called the Step Pyramid, it is the oldest of all, it was built to be the tomb of King Zoser, who reigned in Memphis perhaps 4,500 years before Christ. Close by the Step Pyramid Mr. Cecil Firth has discovered two Tomb Chapels. There are many tombs of the old empire there, and they have yielded much to the museum at Cairo. But the structures now brought to light belong to the same dynasty as the Step Pyramid, that is, they were built not less than 5,000, perhaps 7,000, years ago, and we are told that they will prove to be the oldest stone buildings in the world.

“What is even more wonderful is that the architecture and the craftsmanship which they exhibit are of a very high order, pointing further back still to a long period of development. The style is not what we commonly think of as Egyptian, for the columns are fluted and have leaf-form capitals. How long had the people in the Nile delta been building with stone before they learnt the mastery of the material which such work required? How many thousands of years must we allow as the period during which men have had the ability to use stone for their houses and their temples?

“Long before that, be it remembered, men were building with brick. The earliest Egyptian dynasties have left forts of brickwork. Before the first brick was burnt in the sun in Egypt or on the Chaldaean plain, man must have been making himself habitations. For the ability to plan a brick-built hut implies some power of design, some knowledge of what a house should be. We do not know how quick were the processes of constructing, self-taught, the elements of civilization. But it is plain that we must think of the human race as having possessed for vast unmeasured ages the most important of the arts of life. We may be tempted to think that the difference in civilization and in mastery of Nature between an Englishman of the eighteenth century and an Egyptian 4,000 years before Christ was less than the difference between us and that eighteenth century ancestor of ours. But perhaps we exaggerate our advantages.”

How long will it be, one asks, before archaeologists relinquish altogether the idea that man ever has come up from the savage state? So far as our actual experience of peoples in that state goes, we should

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rather infer that they are the declining remnants of once civilized races, than that they are destined to evolve into civilizations. Such races, when left alone, tend to grow weaker and more ignorant; and it is only under the influence of civilized races that the individuals in them depart from their ancestral ways and acquire culture. This goes to show that human evolution depends on a passing on of the light from one to another — upon inspiration and teaching, in short.

It would seem from our quotation that we cannot regard the Egyptian style in architecture and delineation as a primitive stage. What we know of the Egyptians in other respects would indicate that they could have achieved elaboration if they had not intended rather to achieve sublimity. But the 'mastery of nature' is not the only nor the most important achievement of man. Superior to this is the knowledge of self, the mastery of human nature, the power to understand and deal with the whole nature of Man, physical, mental, and spiritual. Archaeology is destined to reveal abundant evidence of the existence of the Wisdom-Religion of antiquity.

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

THE following quotation illustrates a certain scientific attitude towards religion.

"Religion is a necessity to most of mankind. Modern psychology shows that it is one of the highest activities, a natural function which needs education. Science must study it as an activity of man just as it studies the building of a honeycomb in a beehive.

"The religion of the past has dealt with the unknown, the mystic, the miraculous. The religion of the future will deal with the known, the real, the natural. Religion will be the relation between our personality and external reality."— *Julian Huxley*

We recognise here one of those evidences, becoming more and more frequent, of the passing of that attitude of self-sufficiency and complacent materialism which in earlier times has seemed to characterize many scientific utterances. Religion is recognised as indispensable; and the scientific man, justly reliant upon its methods, seeks to find the means of bringing together all human faculties in the common search for truth. Yet it must be said that considerable obscurity and confusion of thought is apparent.

By implication, we must understand that the unknown is the unreal, and the known the real. Also that the unknown is not natural; while what is natural is known. This will never do: there must be a vast deal which we do not know, and which yet is perfectly natural; and it is a bold man that would say that what we know is more real than can be anything which we do not know. Moreover, nothing is more certain than that the mystic and unknown is what constitutes the whole attraction of religion for mankind; and that it is precisely this element which

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is regarded as distinguishing religion from science. To some people the remarks quoted may seem to be a replacement of the old-time hostility of science towards religion by a condescending patronism; or as expressing a desire to make religion a branch of science.

According to a saying of H. P. Blavatsky, which we have several times found occasion to quote, religion and science can be reconciled only on the condition that *both* shall cleanse their houses; and this well sums up the attitude we intend to take. Religion and science must both aspire towards what is greater than either — the knowledge of reality and truth, the great Wisdom-Religion, which is the root of both religion and science, the jewel of which they are but facets. We can never satisfy our minds or our hearts by limiting them to the known, thus leaving out that great background of the unknown, towards which we ever aspire as to a goal before our steps, and which we contemplate with the eye of faith, the precursor of knowledge to come. The natural is not limited to that which our external senses can descry and examine; nor can the phantasmagoria of the sensory world be dignified with the name of 'the real.' Science must recognise that the picture presented by the senses and sensory concepts is the unreal; and that the real lies beyond.

Religion, for many people, perhaps for most, means something more than a psychological attribute which can be tilled and watered by science, or dissected like a honeycomb in a hive. One feels that the author, in writing thus, has had in mind, not true religion but certain forms and ceremonies and dogmas. If we can examine and dissect the history of superstition and folk-lore, can we do so to loyalty and honor, truth and justice, compassion and unselfishness? Are these mere psychological traits to be inspected by science?

The faculties used by science can find out much about the external face of nature. But to penetrate beyond the veil of illusion and attain the knowledge of Reality, we must awaken dormant faculties; and this has to be achieved by that self-study which leads to self-mastery. True Religion consists in the recognition that man is essentially and primarily an immortal Soul, and in modeling one's life in accordance with that recognition. On this condition, science can be a handmaiden to the Truth; but without it, scientists will merely do what religious dogmatism has done in the past — block the way to freedom of thought.

### PESSIMISM VS. KNOWLEDGE

A QUOTATION meets our eye from the autobiography of Mark Twain, and it may serve as a sample of many similar utterances. Its burden is the apparent futility and ruthless indifference of the cosmos, and the alleged utter helplessness of man in the face of unescapable sorrow. The

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author's characteristic exaggeration and violence of expression are of course apparent. But this very extremeness is in one way an advantage; for so powerfully does he delineate one side of the question that the other side stands out conspicuously, just as immortality is triumphantly proclaimed in Bryant's well-known 'Face of Death.' Do the brutes thus torture themselves with rebellions and denunciations of the lot that is theirs? Is not the fact that man does so torture himself abundant proof that he has — nay, that he *is* — an immortal Soul, not limited or bound by the laws of external nature? Does it not show that, like a lion in a net, he has the power to rebel, and that he is greater than circumstance?

Let us imagine three stages: the first that of the brute, who accepts all unquestioningly; the second that of the *man*, who rebels; the third that of the man, who, from rebellion, has won onward to knowledge. Is it not then evident that stage the second marks a stage of progress?

Well it is for Theosophists that they do not believe that death ends a man's career of progress in knowledge and experience. Otherwise they might indeed repine that anyone should pass away leaving such pessimistic thoughts behind him. But they know that that Soul will one day win on through pessimism to a stage which others have reached before him; the stage where despair has summoned forth the strength of the Soul, and knowledge, demanded, has supervened.

Problems are given us that we may solve them. For the brute there is no problem. For man, because his nature is dual, there must always be a problem, until he has succeeded in sounding the mysteries of his own nature. The lower mind paints a picture which the higher mind cannot tolerate. Hence the agony of doubt and despair. This thing that we call human life is *not* all — not even a sorry half. The Soul protests.

But where shall we seek the other half? Shall we look beyond the grave to some heaven of bliss where injustice shall be made up and tears washed away? Shall we adopt any subterfuge that will wile away our efforts from the arena of battle wherein we stand? Nay, let us rather seek the reality of life in life itself. Let us boldly proclaim that our pessimism is the result of our own weaknesses and limitations.

We say that this life is a nightmare, but we do not know what this life is — can be. We have not tapped its best resources. We have moods of joy and peace besides our despondent moods; what we see in life is more dependent on our internal condition than on conditions outside. Hence it is within that contentment and knowledge must ever be sought. But let us bear in mind that we cannot escape by a perpetual running away from the unpleasant in pursuit of the pleasant. By that method we merely set up a perpetual vibration from one to the other. It is necessary to accept all experience and learn from it, if we would attain that un-



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changing poise and equanimity which is upset by no moods, whether of exultation or repining.

That picture of human life on the large scale, which represents it as a ceaseless repetition of the same futile experiences, is but the result of our blindness to what is really going on in the drama of Souls. We may see the mere forms or shadows flitting across the stage; but of the history and destiny of each individual Soul we have taken no account. Why pose as the helpless and put-upon victim of a silly tyranny? Is it not an unheroic attitude to assume? Why not claim the dignity of manhood? Why not resolve to tread the path of Knowledge?

## A LAND OF MYSTERY

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE coast of Peru," says Mr. Heath, "extends from Tumbes to the river Loa, a distance of 1233 miles. Scattered over this whole extent, there are thousands of ruins besides those just mentioned . . . while nearly every hill and spire of the mountains have upon them or about them some relic of the east; and in every ravine, from the coast to the central plateau, there are ruins of walls, cities, fortresses, burial-vaults, and miles and miles of terraces and water-courses. Across the plateau and down the eastern slope of the Andes to the home of the wild Indian, and into the unknown impenetrable forest, still you find them. In the mountains, however, where showers of rain and snow with the terrific thunder and lightning are nearly constant a number of months each year, the ruins are different. Of granite, porphyritic lime and silicated sandstone, these massive, colossal, cyclopean structures have resisted the disintegration of time, geological transformations, earthquakes, and the sacrilegious, destructive hand of the warrior and treasure-seeker. The masonry composing these walls, temples, houses, towers, fortresses, or sepulchers, is uncemented, held in place by the incline of the walls from the perpendicular, and the adaptation of each stone to the place designed for it, the stones having from six to many sides, each dressed, and smoothed to fit another or others with such exactness that the blade of a small pen-knife cannot be inserted in any of the seams thus formed, whether in the central parts entirely hidden, or on the internal or external surfaces. These

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stones, selected with no reference to uniformity in shape or size, vary from one-half cubic foot to 1500 cubic feet solid contents, and if, in the *many, many millions* of stones you could find one that would fit in the place of another, it would be purely accidental. In 'Triumph Street,' in the city of Cuzco, in a part of the wall of the ancient house of the Virgins of the Sun, is a very large stone, known as 'the stone of the twelve corners,' since it is joined with those that surround it by twelve faces, each having a different angle. Besides these twelve faces it has its internal one, and no one knows how many it has on its back that is hidden in the masonry. In the wall in the center of the Cuzco fortress there are stones 13 feet high, 15 feet long, and 8 feet thick, and all have been quarried miles away. Near this city there is an oblong smooth boulder, 18 feet in its longer axis, and twelve feet in its lesser. On one side are large niches cut out, in which a man can stand and by swaying his body cause the stone to rock. These niches apparently were made solely for this purpose. One of the most wonderful and extensive of these works in stone is that called Ollantay-Tambo, a ruin situated 30 miles north of Cuzco, in a narrow ravine on the bank of the river Urubamba. It consists of a fortress constructed on the top of a sloping, craggy eminence. Extending from it to the plain below is a stony stairway. At the top of the stairway are six large slabs, 12 feet high, 5 feet wide, and 3 feet thick, side by side, having between them and on top narrow strips of stone about 6 inches wide, frames as it were to the slabs, and all being of dressed stone. At the bottom of the hill, part of which was made by hand, and at the foot of the stairs, a stone wall 10 feet wide and 12 feet high extends some distance into the plain. In it are many niches, all facing the south."

The ruins in the islands in Lake Titicaca, where Inca history begins, have often been described. At Tiahuanaco, a few miles south of the lake, there are stones in the form of columns, partly dressed, placed in line at certain distances from each other, and having an elevation above the ground of from 18 to 20 feet. In this same line there is a monolithic doorway, now broken, 10 feet high by 13 wide. The space cut out for the door is 7 feet 4 inches high by 3 feet 2 inches wide. The whole face of the stone above the door is engraved. Another similar, but smaller, lies on the ground beside it. These stones are of hard porphyry, and differ geologically from the surrounding rock; hence we infer they must have been brought from elsewhere. "At Chavin de Huanta," a town in the province of Huari, there are some ruins worthy of note. The entrance to them is by an alley-way 6 feet wide and 9 feet high, roofed over with sand-stone partly dressed, of more than 12 feet in length. On each side there are rooms 12 feet wide, roofed over by large pieces of sand-stone 1½ feet thick and from 6 to 9 feet wide. The walls of the rooms are 6 feet thick,

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and have some loopholes in them, probably for ventilation. In the floor of this passage there is a very narrow entrance to a subterranean passage that passes beneath the river to the other side. From this many huacas, stone drinking-vessels, instruments of copper and silver, and a skeleton of an Indian sitting, were taken. The greater part of these ruins were situated over aqueducts. The bridge to these castles is made of three stones of dressed granite, 24 feet long, 2 feet wide by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  thick. Some of the granite stones are covered with hieroglyphics. At Corralones, 24 miles from Arequipa, there are hieroglyphics engraved on masses of granite, which appear as if painted with chalk. There are figures of men, llamas, circles, parallelograms, letters as an R and an O, and even remains of a system of astronomy.

At Huaytar, in the province of Castro Virreina, there is an edifice with the same engravings.

At Nazca, in the province of Ica, there are some wonderful ruins of aqueducts, 4 to 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, very straight, double-walled, of unfinished stone, flagged on top.

At Quelap, not far from Chochapayas, there have lately been examined some extensive works. A wall of dressed stone, 560 feet wide, 3660 long, and 150 feet high. The lower part is solid. Another wall above this has 600 feet length, 500 width, and the same elevation of 150 feet. There are niches over both walls, 3 feet long,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  wide and thick, containing the remains of those ancient inhabitants, some naked, others enveloped in shawls of cotton of distinct colors and well embroidered. . . . Following the entrances of the second and highest wall, there are other sepulchers like small ovens, 6 feet high and 24 in circumference; in their base are flags, upon which some cadavers reposed. On the north side there is on the perpendicular rocky side of the mountain, a brick wall, having small windows 600 feet from the bottom. *No reason for this*, nor means of approach, can now be found. The skilful construction of utensils of gold and silver that were found here, the ingenuity and solidity of this gigantic work of dressed stone, make it also probably of pre-Incal date. . . . Estimating five hundred ravines in the 1200 miles of Peru, and ten miles of terraces of fifty tiers to each ravine, which would only be five miles of twenty-five tiers to each side, we have 250,000 miles of stone wall, averaging three to four feet high — enough to encircle this globe ten times. Surprising as these estimates may seem, I am fully convinced that an actual measurement would more than double them, for these ravines vary from 30 to 100 miles in length. While at San Mateo, a town in the valley of the River Rimac, where the mountains rise to a height of 1500 or 2000 feet above the river bed, I counted two hundred tiers, none of which were less than four and many more than six miles long.

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“Who then,” very pertinently inquires Mr. Heath, “were these people, cutting through sixty miles of granite; transplanting blocks of hard porphyry, of Baalbic dimensions, miles from the place where quarried, across valleys thousands of feet deep, over mountains, along plains, leaving no trace of how or where they carried them; people (said to be) ignorant of the use of wood, with the feeble llama their only beast of burden; who after having brought these stones fitted them into stones with mosaic precision; terracing thousands of miles of mountain side; building hills of adobe and earth, and huge cities; leaving works in clay, stone, copper, silver, gold, and embroidery, many of which cannot be duplicated at the present age; people apparently vying with Dives in riches, Hercules in strength and energy, and the ant and bee in industry?”

Callao was submerged in 1746, and entirely destroyed. Lima was ruined in 1678; in 1746 only 20 houses out of 3000 were left standing, while the ancient cities in the Huatica and Lurin valleys still remain in a comparatively good state of preservation. San Miguel de Puro, founded by Pizarro in 1531, was entirely destroyed in 1855, while the old ruins near by suffered little. Arequipa was thrown down in August, 1868, but the ruins near show no change. In engineering, at least, the present may learn from the past. We hope to show that it may in most things else.

To refer all these cyclopean constructions then to the days of the Incas is, as we have shown before, more inconsistent yet, and seems even a greater fallacy than that too common one of attributing every rock-temple of India to Buddhist excavators. As many authorities show — Dr. Heath among the rest — Inca history only dates back to the eleventh century A. D., and the period from that time to the Conquest is utterly insufficient to account for such grandiose and innumerable works; nor do the Spanish historians know much of them. Nor again, must we forget that the temples of heathendom were odious to the narrow bigotry of the Roman Catholic fanatics of those days; and that whenever the chance offered, they either converted them into Christian churches or razed them to the ground. Another strong objection to the idea lies in the fact that the Incas were destitute of a written language, and that these antique relics of bygone ages are covered with hieroglyphics. “It is granted that the Temple of the Sun, at Cuzco, was of Inca make, but that is the latest of the five styles of architecture visible in the Andes, each probably representing an age of human progress.”

The hieroglyphics of Peru and Central America have been, are, and will most probably remain for ever as dead a letter to our cryptographers as they were to the Incas. The latter like the barbarous ancient Chinese and Mexicans kept their records by means of a quipus (or *knot* in Peruvian) — a cord several feet long composed of different colored threads, from

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which a multi-colored fringe was suspended; each color denoting a sensible object, and knots serving as ciphers. "The mysterious science of the quipus," says Prescott, "supplied the Peruvians with the means of communicating their ideas to one another, and of transmitting them to future generations. . . ." Each locality, however, had its own method of interpreting these elaborate records, hence a quipus was only intelligible in the place where it was kept. "Many quipus have been taken from the graves, in excellent state of preservation in color and texture," writes Dr. Heath; "but the lips that alone could pronounce the verbal key, have for ever ceased their function, and the relic-seeker has failed to note the exact spot where each was found, so that the records which could tell so much we want to know will remain sealed till all is revealed at the last day . . ."— if anything at all is revealed then. But what is certainly as good as a revelation *now*, while our brains are in function, and our mind is acutely alive to some pre-eminently suggestive facts, is the incessant discoveries of archaeology, geology, ethnology, and other sciences. It is the almost irrepressible conviction that man having existed upon earth millions of years — for all we know — the theory of cycles is the only plausible theory to solve the great problems of humanity, the rise and fall of numberless nations and races, and the ethnological differences among the latter. This difference — which, though as marked as the one between a handsome and intellectual European and a digger Indian of Australia, yet makes the ignorant shudder and raise a great outcry at the thought of destroying the imaginary "great gulf between man and brute creation"— might thus be well accounted for. The digger Indian, then, in company with many other savage, though to him superior, nations, which evidently are dying out to afford room to men and races of a superior kind, would have to be regarded in the same light as so many dying-out specimens of animals — and no more. Who can tell but that the forefathers of this flat-headed savage—forefathers who may have lived and prospered amidst the highest civilization before the glacial period — were in the arts and sciences far beyond those of the present civilization — though it may be in quite another direction? That man has lived in America, at least, 50,000 years ago is now proved scientifically and remains a fact beyond doubt or cavil. In a lecture delivered at Manchester in June last, by Mr. H. A. Allbut, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Society, the lecturer stated the following: "Near New Orleans, in one part of the modern delta, in excavating for gas works, a series of beds, almost wholly made up of vegetable matter, were dug through. In the excavation, at a depth of 16 feet from the upper surface, and beneath four buried forests, one on the top of the other, the laborers discovered some charcoal and the skeleton of a man, the cranium of which was reported to be that of the

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type of the aboriginal Red Indian race. To this skeleton Dr. Dowler ascribed an antiquity of some 50,000 years." The irrepressible cycle in the course of time brought down the descendants of the contemporaries of the late inhabitant of this skeleton, and intellectually as well as physically they have degenerated, as the present elephant has degenerated from his proud and monstrous forefather, the antediluvian *Sivatherium* whose fossil remains are still found in the Himâlayas; or, as the lizard has from the plesiosaurus. Why should man be the only specimen upon earth which has never changed in form since the first day of his appearance upon this planet? The fancied superiority of every generation of mankind over the preceding one is not yet so well established as to make it impossible for us to learn some day, that as in everything else, the theory is a two-sided question — incessant progress on the one side and an as irresistible decadence on the other, of the cycle. "Even as regards knowledge and power, the advance which some claim as a characteristic feature of humanity, is effected by exceptional individuals who arise in certain races under favorable circumstances only, and is quite compatible with long intervals of immobility, and *even of decline*" says a modern man of science.

This point is corroborated by what we see in the modern degenerate descendants of the great and powerful races of ancient America — the Peruvians and the Mexicans. "How changed! How fallen from their greatness must have been the Incas, when a little band of one hundred and sixty men could penetrate, uninjured, to their mountain homes, murder their worshiped kings and thousands of their warriors, and carry away their riches, and that, too, in a country where a few men with stones could resist successfully an army! Who could recognise in the present Inichua and Aymara Indians their noble ancestry? . . ." Thus writes Dr. Heath, and his conviction that America was once united with Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, seems as firm as our own. There must exist geological and physical cycles as well as intellectual and spiritual; globes and planets, as well as races and nations are born to grow, progress, decline, and — die. Great nations split, scatter into small tribes, lose all remembrance of their integrity, gradually fall into their primitive state and — disappear, one after the other, from the face of the earth. So do great continents. Ceylon must have formed, once upon a time, part of the Indian continent. So, to all appearances, was Spain once joined to Africa, the narrow channel between Gibraltar and the latter continent having been once upon a time dry land. Gibraltar is full of large apes of

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9. *Journal of Science* for February; Article — "The Alleged Distinction between Man and Brute."

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the same kind as those which are found in great numbers on the opposite side on the African coast, whereas nowhere in Spain is either a monkey or ape to be found at any place whatever. And the caves of Gibraltar are also full of gigantic human bones, supporting the theory that they belong to an antediluvian race of men. The same Dr. Heath mentions the town of Eten in 70° S. latitude of America, in which the inhabitants of an unknown tribe of men speak a monosyllabic language that imported Chinese laborers understood from the first day of their arrival. They have their own laws, customs, and dress, neither holding nor permitting communication with the outside world. No one can tell whence they came or when; whether it was before or after the Spanish Conquest. They are a living mystery to all who chance to visit them. . . .

With such facts before us to puzzle exact science herself and show our entire ignorance of the past, verily we recognise no right of any man on earth — whether in geography or ethnology, in exact or abstract sciences — to tell his neighbor — “So far shalt thou go, and no further.”

But, recognising our debt of gratitude to Dr. Heath of Kansas, whose able and interesting paper has furnished us with such a number of facts, and suggested such possibilities, we can do no better than quote his concluding reflexions. “Thirteen thousand years ago,” he writes, “*Vega* or *a Lyrae*, was the north polar star; since then how many changes has she seen in our planet! How many nations and races spring into life, rise to their zenith of splendor, and then decay; and when we shall have been gone thirteen thousand years, and once more she resumes her post at the north, completing a ‘Platonic or Great Year,’ think you that those who shall fill our places on the earth at that time will be more conversant with our history than we are of those that have passed? Verily might we exclaim in terms almost psalmetic, ‘Great God, Creator and Director of the Universe, what is man that Thou art mindful of him!’”

Amen! ought to be the response of such as yet believe in a God who is “the Creator and Director of the Universe.”




“THE Theosophist sees all around him the evidence that the race-mind is changing by enlargement, that the old days of dogmatism are gone and that the ‘age of inquiry’ has come, that the inquiries will grow louder year by year and the answer be required to satisfy the mind as it grows more and more, until at last, all dogmatism being ended, the race will be ready to face all problems, each man for himself, all working for the good of the whole, and that the end will be the perfecting of those who struggle to overcome the brute side of their nature.”— *W. Q. Judge*

## THE STORY OF KALANDA

P. A. MALPAS

III

WESTWARD HO

HERE was one pledge that Chandragupta had demanded of Kalanda, and only one. It was that he should keep himself pure, bodily and mentally, as befitted a Hindû. Lala and the group of Hindûs that were with Kalanda had been solemnly promised on the word of Alexander that their religious formalities and customs and beliefs should be respected, and since Kalanda was received as an officer of Chandragupta's staff, young though he was, the Greeks treated him honorably.

But the Hindûs could not fail to observe what utterly immoral semi-barbarians the Greeks were, in spite of their outward pretense to civilization. At all times when such a one as Chandragupta, a messenger of the gods, comes to establish righteousness on earth, you have merely to look for the most fashionable and reputable state of society to find that all is rottenness within. There is no coincidence about it. The adept kings of the divine race come on purpose to set up a barrier against the evil of materiality and sensuousness, even though that evil is hidden under the most respectable forms.

If Chandragupta had not come to India when he did, the Greeks in fifty years would have destroyed that great continent, for India is a continent. Not by arms — nothing so simple or even so honorable, if war is ever honorable. But their then utter moral degradation filled the land with dead men's bones and all rottenness. Greek girls figured very largely in the trade with India and they brought with them the seeds of all destruction. The sacred virgins of the temples (of which one is admirably pictured in the later stories of the girl Miriam in the Hebrew books, who at the age of fourteen became the mother of one of their reformers) had been pure and undefiled until the Greeks came. After that, they became the nautch-girls of whom so much is said in condemnation of the Hindû religion by the very westerners who are descended from the men who corrupted the purity of India. We need not go farther into the matter, but will remark that this is one of the least faults of the Greek rottenness that they took to India; a corruption that only the purity and holiness of the Buddhist Chandragupta was able to stem in some degree. It is the only way in which the Greeks ever conquered India, and it is



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not much of which to boast. Perhaps that is why the Greek historians of later times found it desirable to write such extraordinary fairy-tales on third-hand hearsay as to the history of the 'conquest of India' by Alexander. Certainly that brilliant if erratic young man did get as far as the western side of the Indus, almost to Taxila, but if our tale is not accurate in every point, it is hardly more inaccurate than the Greek histories that have passed down to us as 'gospel' simply because they are Greek.

Why, the fact that a Greek wrote a history no more makes it true than that a clever ecclesiastic supporter of the old régime makes it true when he wrote 'history' round the "great Napoleon, Lieutenant-General of the Armies of the King!" Nor is Greek history necessarily more proportionate than the English histories of the day which give a couple of lines to the battle of Patay where Joan of Arc turned the English out of France and forever gave a new shape to European history; nor is the Greek any more trustworthy than the American school-history that this writer has had to teach (out of the book) to American schoolboys as to the English, based on a few distorted facts of what was 'history' in 1776. Perhaps, who knows, there may be American histories now, showing that Washington was an *Englishman* and the best of Englishmen, fighting for freedom from the enemies of England who had eaten into the core of the home Government. If there is no such history, there will be, some day. At any rate, Greek fairy-tales that pass as history simply because a lot of old fogies of mediaeval universities thought that anything Greek or Latin must be right and above criticism, needs revision, just as soon as some one arrives with the wit and the sense of proportion to do it.

So . . . to return to the adventures of Kalanda.

Slowly the Greeks made their way back through the terrible desert-sands of Gedrosia — what we call today Beluchisthân. Their army was a strange mixture of Greeks and Syrians, Babylonians and Persians, Afghans and Hillmen, but there were still many Macedonians among them. Some say 30,000 left India and that just 15,000 emerged west of the Desert of Gedrosia. The other fifteen thousand were all that remained in 'India' as a 'garrison' for future historians to boast about. They were a very peaceful garrison, lying unconfined under the burning sands of Beluchisthân.

The Macedonians suffered most. They fed wrongly, they lived wrongly, they were not trained to the almost tropic heat of the land. But even the Hindûs with Kalanda suffered a great deal in that terrible journey. Still, there was no question of their dying so long as they had water and food for Hari. This Alexander took great care to provide. Hari was his mascot — his proof that he had 'conquered India'! Whatever the

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cost, Hari must be kept alive, and with him Kalanda and Lala and the rest of his company. Râma-Sinha was their leader.

At Babylon the governors left behind by Alexander never supposed that he would return from his wild journey into the Far East. The result was corruption and chaos on a grand scale — each was for himself. When Alexander did return, those that could do so and had the money, fled. Others were beheaded by the dozen and at last some sort of order was restored.

It was necessary. For Alexander had magnificent plans for the future. He was going to make Babylon the capital of the World with himself as Emperor. He himself dressed as an Oriental and he made the Macedonians and the Persians mix on equal terms. When the Macedonians revolted to a man — they would call it a 'strike' in these days, — he dismissed them and filled their regiments with Persians. Then they repented and asked to be taken back. He took them back, but let the Persians keep their places with the Greeks under them. Then he arranged a wholesale system of marriage between the Macedonians and Persians so as to produce a race composed equally of the two stocks. He himself married a Persian; the officers of his army married Persian ladies of the nobility and the men-at-arms married Persians of similar social rank. It was a marriage of a nation with another.

The next step in the plan would have been to enlarge the empire westward, at least to Spain. It was a beautiful dream, that of Alexander; beautiful and very practical if there had only been the right men to carry it out.

The Western nations from Italy to Spain, from Libya, from Gaul and Britain, from Russia and Germany, saw the way the wind was blowing and they sent delegates and ambassadors to cement friendship with the coming conqueror. The Druids and leaders of the Celts and Gauls and Lusitanians were far superior to the Greeks of Alexander in their wisdom, just as Chandragupta had been in India — they kept their power to themselves, but used it when necessary. It was only later, when the degraded Roman Empire could not get the culture and wisdom of the Druids without morally qualifying for it, that Julius Caesar had to destroy them and their colleges. Their purity of life and superb religious system was so far above the Greek and Roman mentality of the day (Plato and Socrates were no longer alive), that being unable to attain to it, the new powers of materiality and brutality, entering the descending arc of soul-culture, had to acknowledge themselves inferior or crucify what was better than themselves. Caesar destroyed the glory of the Druid civilization; he could not equal it.

The next year or two were full of incident in the kaleidoscope of

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history. Kalanda was fast growing to be a man, for the Oriental matures rapidly. Also he was under the care of Râma-Sinha, a wise guardian, and under the protection of his own faithfulness towards the pledge he had given to Chandragupta. Though he saw the horrors of Greek civilization with outward impassive unconcern, he was learning his lesson at heart and he was able to realize how immensely superior were his own countrymen to the Western barbarians.

Then came Alexander's sudden death, accelerated if not caused by his lack of care for his health.

The strong central rallying-point of Empire being withdrawn, Alexander's generals divided the Empire between them. Egypt fell to the share of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, and by common consent Râma-Sinha and Kalanda and Lala had been asked if they would go with him. Or rather, go independently, because the army could not wait for Hari's slow, if stately, progress. Ptolemy was very willing to have such a trophy to show in Egypt as the huge Hari and the none-too-big Kalanda; the latter was equally willing to accompany him.

So they journeyed westward by easy stages, avoiding the deserts as much as possible, and in everything trying to consider Hari's interests. He was the ostensible cause of their presence in these strange countries, though Râma-Sinha knew perfectly well in his own mind that it was Kalanda who was enjoying to the full the curriculum of the university of Life. Râma-Sinha was not entirely ignorant of the methods of such wise men as Chandragupta — that is why he had been chosen as Kalanda's unobtrusive guardian.

Kalanda had been hugely interested in the visitors from the far west who had come as delegates and ambassadors to Alexander at Babylon. Especially in the Celts from distant Britain. As usual, he utilized every opportunity to learn the languages of those he met and with the rapidity of Oriental acquirement he could soon speak the wild language of Britain with some facility.

Among the party were three Druids from whom he learned remarkable things. It was not customary for the Druids to write one word of their marvelous philosophy — they preferred to spend twenty years in memorizing the 'literature,' their Bible, and that is why they have been so foolishly misrepresented in later histories as half-ignorant savages. Their culture was far above the civilization of Rome and even Greece in many ways; their inner philosophy was identical with that of Our Lord the Buddha. In their own department of practical philosophy they were head and shoulders above ourselves.

Kalanda learnt how in their most intimate and sacred ceremonies woad, a wonderful blue dye, was used to symbolize the universe expressed

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as man, and all the astonishing mysteries of the microcosm and the macrocosm. Now in Europe it is the Virgin Mary who is always clothed in the blue dye for the same reason; you can see it in almost any painting, but the philosophy behind it has long been forgotten. And the 'history'-books talk foolishly of the Britons dyeing themselves with woad because they were too silly to dress in boiled shirts and silk hats like any civilized man!

When the delegation of ambassadors left Babylon, Kalanda and his party went with them towards the west. Kalanda had taken a great liking to one of the Druids, a splendid young Englishman of twenty-five, and had hoped to share the journey with him for months to come. But on the third day the party of Celts melted suddenly overnight and the Druids were seen no more. Only Kalanda found a yellow Persian rose on his pillow when he woke. He knew it was from his friend. Râma-Sinha told him, cautiously and privately, enough for him to guess that the Druids had gone back towards India to the north and east. It was all so quietly and unostentatiously done that little notice was attracted by their departure; and that was precisely what they wanted. The delegation to Alexander had been a true embassy and it had accomplished its purpose as well as might be. If, in addition, the Druids chose to push on quietly to Kashmir to the initiation-caves and temples of the mystics of the Hindû-Kûsh or the Himâlayas, it was nobody's business but their own.

Only, someday, there would be a new Druid of great power in Britain, and it would be vaguely said that he had learned much in a trip to the East he had made when young, going as one of an embassy to the notorious Alexander the Macedonian. If he ever got into the history-books, they would doubtless say that he learned his wisdom from Alexander!

And the Greeks or Romans would write more history about the savage Druids in Britain who enclosed hundreds of living beings in wicker-cages and burnt them as sacrifices. How should they know or care that the Druids practised the funeral mysteries of cremation in the immemorial way of the East and that the 'cries of the numberless victims' were merely the wailings of the mourners for the dead whose body was being cremated in the wicker-structure? The mysteries of the East and West were closely interlinked, and if their votaries did not choose to boast of their wisdom and learning to every Greek scribbler, that did not prevent them from existing and flourishing when left alone and in peace.

So time passed. We now find Kalanda on his way to Egypt with Hari and Râma-Sinha and Lala entering the coasts of Tyre from the north, whither they had gone to make the desert-journey shorter. Kalanda was now almost a man, an old scholar in the college of experience. One

thing he never forgot; he was passionately studious of languages. Had not his father died for lack of a few words in an enemy's country?

At Babylonian he was an expert. His long residence there in the time of Alexander and afterwards had given him ample opportunity to know the language well. And he knew not a little of the Chaldaean technical priestly language. So that when he came into Syria he found little difficulty in adapting himself to the local dialects. The Aramaic especially, or what we have called Babylonian, was a dialect little differing from several of those he knew well.

Thus Hari came to Palestine with Râma-Sinha and Kalanda and Lala and the group of Indians who had so strangely set out with Alexander.

*(To be continued)*