

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

Divine Wisdom

Brotherhood

Occult Science

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VOL. XXIX., No. 10

TORONTO, DECEMBER 15th, 1948

Price 20 Cents.

THE TIMELESS CHRISTMAS

'The ever unknowable and incognizable Karana alone, the Causeless Cause of all causes, should have its shrine and altar on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through 'the still small voice' of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in silence and the sanctified solitude of their own Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the Universal Spirit, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the Presence.' S.D. 1, 301.

The above quotation is an ever-timely reminder of the inner significance of outer rites and ceremonies. It is especially timely at this season of the year when in all Christian communities the emphasis is laid almost entirely upon a supposedly outer event. The Gospels, according to Matthew and Luke, tell of the birth of a boy to a virgin Jewess, some 1948 years ago, and this story is accepted as being literally true by all orthodox Christian Churches. This event is regarded as the beginning of the Christian religion, despite the teaching of Augustine who spoke of 'this religion which was in the world from the beginning and is now called Christian';

its physical actuality is insisted upon regardless of the teachings of those mystics in the Church who have considered it to be a symbol only and who have set forth the inner significance of the story. Origen, one of the early Church Fathers, taught that there were at least three interpretations to be given to the events related in the Gospels; first, they could be accepted in their literal sense—this he pointed out, was the vulgar interpretation, acceptable only to the ignorant masses; second, they could be regarded as symbolic and be interpreted according to the psychical content, and third, they could be viewed as symbols of an inner spiritual experience—and, Origen added, this latter view was the one acceptable to the wise.

The story of the virgin-born son who becomes the God, is a universal one. Each story has its own setting, its own local colour, its own names for the characters. The essential point of such stories, considered symbolically, is that the 'Christ-Child' by whatever name it is called, is born of the purified soul of man and its overshadowing divinity, 'the father-in-heaven'. It is not an outer event; it is an inner experience.

In the stories the various characters represent inner qualities; Joseph the

carpenter, the reputed father of the child, symbolizes Mind, the fashioning, shaping, conserving, protective quality. Mind acts as the companion of the soul and is the protector and guide of the mystic child during its childhood. It is Mind that protects the child from the adversary, Herod or Herat as the name is given in the earlier Egyptian story, and who there is known as the 'slayer of the youngling in the egg'. Herod symbolizes the familiar principle within us which is ever ready to nullify and destroy the young, growing, creative, unifying power which will be ultimately its dethroner. It is Mind which guides the child to Egypt, the place of learning; but after that period is passed, Mind fades into the background. The inner Christ is now becoming surer of its powers and more certain of its destiny. The subsequent trails are symbols of initiatory experiences which take place within the individual—Calvary, 'the place of the skull', is the scene of the mystical 'crucifixion'—and which experiences test and confirm the standing of the individual and enable him to enter into new and unexplored realms of his own consciousness.

The Christ stories are reminders to mankind that there is a divine power within every man and woman which can be brought into full manifestation. The process by which this is accomplished has analogies to physical conception, birth, growth and maturity; from its first faint and subtle manifestations the divine power grows in splendour and power until finally the candidate 'standeth like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising Sun of thought eternal poureth forth its first most glorious rays . . . He holdeth life and death in his strong hand'; until in the full consciousness of his matured powers he can say "I and my Father are one."

The mystical Christmas is timeless;

it can happen today or any day; it occurs whenever any man or woman of any race or land first awakens to an awareness of his or her indissoluble link with the one divine life of universe and like a child new-born, starts out on the ancient Path of Return.

HILDEGARD HENDERSON

A Tribute

Mrs. H. Henderson was well known to readers of the Canadian Theosophist, and many will read with sincere regret of her death on 18 September, 1948, at her home in Victoria, B.C.

To those who have had the privilege of close association with her in her work with The H.P.B. Blavatsky Library in Victoria, the loss is very great indeed. For the last twenty-five years her fine, stimulating mind, energy and compassionate purpose have been devoted to the sole task of promulgating and elucidating the written works of H. P. Blavatsky through the medium of this Library. During this period, she wrote innumerable letters to enquirers of all kinds, stressing always the vital necessity of turning to the original, unaltered editions of H.P.B.'s Works. With her sound understanding of the teaching, and from her wealth of experience, Mrs. Henderson was able to start many on the right path.

During the last year of her life her health failed rapidly, but the mind remained lucid, and, even up to the last few weeks, she was pondering on matters of wide interest to Theosophists, such as reports on the Urga M.S., recently discussed in London, England.

Mrs. Henderson was the daughter of an American wool broker, and spent her early years in New York City. Her mother died when she was very young, and she was forced to assume responsibilities at an early age. While, outwardly, she led the normal life of a young society girl of that day, her mind

was, even then, eagerly searching for the truth, and, to this end, she read widely and was well versed in the classics of her day, searching, sifting and rejecting as she went along. Like many others, the study of Emerson's philosophical essays helped to pave the way and prepare her mind for the illuminating impact of H.P.B.'s teaching, which was to mean so much to her, and from which she never deviated. This event was the great climax of her life, and it came about through a meeting with Mrs. A. L. Cleather in 1910, which was the beginning of a long and faithful friendship until Mrs. Cleather's death in 1938.

Mrs. Cleather, who had been a personal pupil of H.B.P. and one of her Inner Group members, was, at that time, the centre of a small group of earnest students, who held their meetings at the Writer's Club in London, England, and Mrs. Henderson soon became one of their number. She now began to acquire the nucleus of a valuable Theosophical library, and spent much time in the study of the Teaching. When, later, Mrs. Cleather and her party moved to Italy in the course of their work, Mrs. Henderson, often accompanied by her husband and son, joined them for extended visits, and many are the interesting experiences she was able to relate of esoteric research in such ancient and historical places as Rome, Naples, Sicily and, following these, in Egypt, where they spent a night in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. During these years she acquired much valuable knowledge from her close association with one who was so deeply versed in the H.P.B. teaching.

In the last year of the First World War (1918), Mrs. Cleather moved to India, and in 1921 Mrs. Henderson made one more long journey to visit her in Darjeeling, returning the same year,

when she finally settled, with her husband, in Victoria, B.C., remaining there until her death. When the "Back to Blavatsky" Movement came into being, and Dr. Stokes conducted his stout and uncompromising defence of H.P.B. (1920-22), Mrs. Cleather became very active, and, with her gifted and experienced pen, took a leading and fearless part in this effort to re-discover H.P.B., to lead Theosophists back to the original teaching, and to expose the current perversions of her Works. Mrs. Henderson joined whole heartedly in this effort, and gave unstintingly of her time, energy and money to the same Cause.

The H.P.B. Library, originally founded in England in 1917 by Mrs. Cleather, was formally transferred by her to Mrs. Henderson following the latter's establishment in Victoria, B.C., and, to the care and development of this Library, Mrs. Henderson devoted all her energy from that time on. The Library contained a valuable collection of original Theosophical publications, which had been collected by Mrs. Cleather in the early days of the Movement, and was greatly increased by Mrs. Henderson during the long period that followed.

The revival of the original H.P.B. teaching was by now well established, and there were many enquiries in both America and England, where original H.P.B. students were rallying to the Cause. As a result of these enquiries, the Blavatsky Association was formed in London, with the same objects as the H.P.B. Library in Victoria, namely, to form a nucleus of original and unaltered editions of H.P.B.'s Works, to clear H. P. B.'s name from all libels and misrepresentations and to hold together a united body of people who would endeavour to carry on the work in its original form.

To these objectives Mrs. Henderson has been entirely faithful. Her work in defence of H.P.B. is well known. Many

useful articles have been reprinted by her Library and are still in circulation. The Peking Edition of "The Voice of the Silence", was sponsored by her in this country. All the Public and University Libraries in Canada and United States have been supplied with copies of Mrs. Cleather's three books on Madam Blavatsky, and many enquiries and interesting borrowers have been drawn to the Library as a result of this work. We are glad to be able to state that The H. P. B. Library will be carried on, after a brief period of re-adjustment, by Mrs. Edith Fielding, who has been Mrs. Henderson's co-worker for over eighteen years.

The passing of this loyal soul will leave a great gap in the ranks of the H.P.B. Theosophists, and long will she be honoured as a devoted outpost for the Blavatsky teaching in the Far West.

The Trustees,

The H.P.B. Lending Library.

November 4, 1948.

Victoria, B.C.

THE THREE TRUTHS

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen, or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute law-giver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.—Idyll of the White Lotus.

DREAMS AND VISIONS

(Do they teach us anything?)

I have had many dreams and some visions. I have often wondered why! Looking back, I see I might have learned many things. I did not, however, realize that I was being taught.

Two dreams which came to me in my sixth year were recurring dreams. This may be because the incidents of each dream impressed themselves on my consciousness.

In the first dream I seemed to be a tall, slim, dark-skinned girl in the teens. My hair was long, straight and black. Actually I was a six-year old English girl, light-haired and white. In this dream I ate a mango, sat in a room in a house with a verandah, saw a Hindu woman nursing a white baby and trying to comfort a group of frightened elder children, also white.

I sat apart from them. I thought of the children as 'stupid little white things'. I was frightened, but I would not show it. It was several years before I saw a house with a verandah. They are not common in Somerset. I was twenty-four before I saw a mango and knew it for the fruit in my dream. At eighteen, I met a clairvoyant lady at a church social. She saw my dream; repeated it all to me, and finished by warning me never to go to a country where there were black people because a black man would kill me.

It is true that in my dream a black man wearing a white turban dragged me out of the room and down some steps. I would then see a blade flashing and awaken with a red pain in my head. I always associated the colour red with the pain.

Nearly six years later I met the clairvoyant again. She had not seen me in the interval and could not have known anything about me. Again she repeated my dream, but this time she said: "You

were an Eurasian girl and were killed in the "Indian Mutiny".

In the second dream I seemed to partake of the nature of my surroundings. I was conscious in the air, in the dust particles that gleamed in the sunlight, in the rock wall of a cave and in the gravelled entrance. I lost some of this extension of consciousness when I went deeper into the cave. I saw stalactite pillars, rosy with a glow which seemed to come from flames rising and falling.

I heard men singing. I watched them as they came into view. It was a procession of men, some quite old, others perhaps in their forties. They all wore long robes of a material I did not recognize at the time. I have since seen Arab robes of camel-hair and they look to be the same. Some were almost white, others shades of grey and brown. All had very long sleeves and cord girdles. The head cloths were bound around the temples with a cord.

As the men walked in procession, they sang, and that which they sang sounded like a hymn. One man, younger than the rest, looked at me very intently. Suddenly it was I who looked out of those brown eyes. I paraded with them. I sang with them. And then I tried to grasp the words they were singing. They were: "The gift is the gift of God, The power is the power of Fire." Then I was myself again, and awake.

This dream came oftener than the first but the clairvoyant saw nothing of it.

The idea of reincarnation was not new to me. From childhood I had known it to be true but I could not have told why. I knew nothing of Karma. Books by writers such as Rider Haggard and Marie Corelli spoke of reincarnation but always the reincarnated person was an exact physical replica of the old one. If I was really a reincarnation of the Hindu girl this could not be true. I did not know myself as a spirit

wearing a body. I had been taught I was a body possessing a soul. And I did not bother about it.

Then, in South Africa, I was in an ambulance going to the hospital. The road was very little more than a track with rocks jutting up all over and when the horse-drawn vehicle bumped over one of those rocks, I found myself in the roof of the ambulance, looking down at another self on the stretcher. It was my body there. There seemed to be two of me and it was I, looking down at the body, who was thinking.

My thoughts ran something like this: "I'm dead. This must be a hearse. Wonder where they're taking me. How yellow my face is. Wish I could remember." Through the plain pieces of glass in the pattern of the ambulance window I saw masonry. Then I thought, "Why don't they bury me quickly. If they move me I'll only have more pain." I tried to recall the name of the cemetery and was just getting "Braamfontein" when the door was opened. I was drawn into my body at once. There was a click in my head and once again there was only one of me.

Later on, lying in the hospital thinking things over, I came to the conclusion that the thinker, the consciousness, possessed the body, and could have a separate existence. The idea that I might once have been a Hindu girl and was now English, was quite feasible. I was still puzzled over the second dream, in which my consciousness seemed merged in other objects.

A few years after I came to Canada, a man died; a man of whom I knew nothing but good. He had political enemies and just before his death stories to his discredit were circulated. His death came suddenly and many called it suicide. I felt a great desire to help him but I did not know how. I had just joined the T.S. and had been

told that Mrs. Besant could go consciously on the astral plane in order to help those in need. I wrote to her, telling her the circumstances and asking her to help him if possible. I had no answer from her.

The following Sunday I awoke early. I was not thinking of this man. I had not thought of him since mailing the letter. There was some one behind me; someone whose arms were around me, holding me safely, carrying me through the air. The air was blue, then white as though with frost. We moved very quickly. The white atmosphere became a mist, then a fog, at last thick and brown. We were not moving so quickly now. It became so thick and dark, I could no longer see. But could hear.

Out of the blackness came a thin voice, like the voice of a weak child, and listening I heard: 'I was three times brokenhearted. I was three times brokenhearted.' That was all. And I thought of the many he had helped, who were now so willing to listen to and spread the stories that were told. How could I help and why had I been brought there? I could only sympathize and with the thought I seemed to be sending sympathy as if it were a tangible thing.

There was a sudden flurry, a sensation of danger. I was withdrawn, but slowly, for the atmosphere seemed sticky, as if it were a sentient thing, determined to hold me. Then I was in the blue and in my body again, with the click in my head which I had experienced before.

This was not a dream but an actual experience. I told this some years ago to Mr. Clark of Vancouver and his comment was. "Never ask another person to help when you can do it yourself." Was that my lesson?

In "Dream or Vision" printed some time ago I again experienced an extension of consciousness similar to that described in the second recurring dream. This seems to have some con-

nection with the Unity, the Oneness, which underlies all manifestation. Did these experiences come to help me to some degree of understanding of the mystery? This thought came to me as I sat in meditation. I pondered it awhile and then thought ceased. I was still.

There was a white light; a light which folded around me as if I were in a cocoon. There was a feeling of ecstasy. For how long? How can I say! A million years, or a millionth part of a second! One cannot gauge time when time has been suspended and is not. That was all. And it was no dream.

Mrs. N. Dalzell.

1 McLean Bldg.,
Edmonton, Alta.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of the following exchange magazines:

Theosophy (U.L.T.) Sept. & Oct.

The American Theosophist, Oct. & Nov.

Theosophical Forum (Covina) Sept. to Nov.

The Theosophist (Adyar) August.

Theosophia, Sept.-Oct., Nov.-Dec.

The Young Citizen (Adyar) August.

Ancient Wisdom, Sept. & Oct.

Lucifer (Covina), July.

Golden Lotus, Aug. & Sept.

The Speculative Mason, July.

The New Outlook, Sept.

Modern Mystic and Monthly Science Review.

Teosofica (Antigua), July-August.

Norsk Teosofisk Tidsskrift.

The Sun (Belgaum Lodge).

Theosophy in Ireland, July-Sept.

Bombay Theosophical Bulletin, Aug.

The Phoenix.

Revista Teosofica Cubana, Aug-Oct.

O Teosofista (Brazil), Sept.

The Aquarian Path (Winter Number).

Theosophia (Holland), Oct.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I was deeply shocked to learn of the sudden deaths of Mr. Jack Morris and of his sister Madge, both of Hermes Lodge, Vancouver. Miss Morris was instantly killed in a motor accident on November 17th and Mr. Morris died two days later from injuries received in the same accident. Mr. Morris was president of the Lodge and both were very active in its affairs and also in the campwork on Orcas Island. My sincere sympathy goes out to the family and friends, and on behalf of the Society in Canada I also send our condolences to Hermes Lodge and to the Canadian Federation of Lodges in this tragic loss of two very valuable workers. Many members of the Society will remember with warm appreciation the visit of Mr. Morris to our Lodges in the fall of 1942. Mr. Morris was Secretary of the Federation at that time.

* * * *

Before me is a pathetic letter just received from the secretary of a resurgent lodge in the far away town of Medan, Sumatra. Before the war it was a flourishing theosophical centre with a fine building and all the necessary appurtenances. Now, after occupation by the Japs there is but a shell left and the members (what is left of them) after three and a half years of internment have returned to find all else destroyed and are dismayed by the lack of everything needful to rehabilitate and carry on. They cry out for literature, books and magazines and crave even for letters from members anywhere who will write and tell them of happenings and doings in the Theosophic world. The secretary poignantly adds "There is a big wall around us, we are still in a cave although not in irons. We are in great need. Will you help us?" An appeal like this I feel sure will touch the hearts of some of my readers and I trust

they will not let this opportunity pass where even a friendly letter will be most acceptable. Address:— Mr. J. P. Gimberg, Secretary Medan Lodge T.S. Electriciteitsweg 11 (Pav), Medan, Sumatra. E.C. This is also an opportunity for our Pen Friends of the Theosophical International Correspondence League.

* * * *

By the time this is in print Christmas will be near, followed closely by the New Year. These events call for the usual felicitations but I will urge something more than those somewhat banal greetings. I would suggest we meet these now commercialized celebrations with a fuller recognition of their real significance and really try to make "Peace on Earth, Good-Will to men" a living reality. At this time of the year there wells up in our hearts an inner surge of hope and gladness and it occurs as regularly as the phases of the seasons, for it is a natural cause and therefore a natural event, having existed since the creation of the manifested universe. The sun has passed the winter solstice and life within every living thing begins to stir. An era of new energy is about to begin, let us take full advantage of it, let us search our innermost being and determine to do our part in Nature's mighty scheme. If we do that we can safely leave the rest to a benign and loving Providence. So my fervent wish to you all is that the peoples of the world, chastened by unprecedented calamities, search their hearts for a better understanding of life and all that it means and earnestly strive to emulate the Divine plan of evolution by "Doing unto others what you would they should do unto you," and that the blessing of the Almighty bring upon the world an apotheosis, an era of peace and happiness that shall be a balm to all humanity.

E. L. T.

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
IN CANADA

Published on the 15th day of every month.

Authorized as second class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa.



Subscription: TWO DOLLARS A YEAR

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All Letters to the Editor, Articles and Reports for Publication
 should be sent to The Editor:

Dudley W. Barr, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Printed by The Griffin & Richmond Co., Ltd.,
 29 Rebecca Street, Hamilton, Ontario.

OFFICE NOTES

Isolated students and those unable to have access to Theosophical literature should avail themselves of the Travelling Library conducted by the Toronto Theosophical Society. There are no charges except for postage on the volumes loaned. For particulars write to the Travelling Librarian, 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, Ont.

* * *

We regret to learn that several members of the editorial staff of *The Golden Lotus* were injured in a motor car accident recently. The October issue of this valuable journal of Buddhist thought was delayed on account of this accident. Our best wishes for speedy recovery are extended to all injured members of the party.

Several issues have been received of a new monthly magazine of Theosophical thought, *New Outlook*, published by New Century Foundation, 1159 West Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles 15. The Foundation "is a philanthropic, educational and scientific body for the propagation of ideas and ideals of brotherhood on *practical* instead of *theoretical* lines. It aims to be international in the highest sense. Its members comprise men and women of all races, creeds, and forms of thought, who work together for one object—*The improvement of humanity.*" The Executive Editor is Hyman Lischner M.D., and one of the Associate Editors is Mr. Ernest Wood, who is well-known to members of the Canadian Society. Other prominent members of various Theosophical groups are associated in the venture. The concise, well-written articles present Theosophical attitudes without using the technical terminology of Theosophical literature and doubtless the Founders desire to serve the ever-increasing number of persons who are seeking this line of thought but who do not wish to be identified with any Theosophical organization. The subscription is \$1.00 per annum.

* * *

An interesting short article appeared in a recent issue of *Case and Comment*, a legal magazine, concerning the only litigation in which the 'God intoxicated' philosopher, Spinoza, was involved. The case concerned a sum of money in his father's estate which was wrongly claimed by Spinoza's sister. The litigation went to the highest court and was decided in Spinoza's favour. He then wrote to his sister stating that he did not want the money and that she could have it all; he had contested the claim only because, in his words, "submission to injustice is to share the guilt with the wrong-doer."

We are very glad to hear that the H. P. B. Library, which was conducted for many years by the late Mrs. H. Henderson, will continue its valuable services to students of Theosophy. Correspondence should be addressed to Mrs. E. Fielding, 235 Irving Road, Victoria, B.C., until further notice.

CORRESPONDENCE

November 15, 1948.

The Editor, Canadian Theosophist.—

Dear Brother, I have read with much interest the valuable essay on "The Earth's Evolution and Revolution", by the late A. C. Fellows, in your journal for September and October, 1948. The writer must have been a man of profound insight and keen intuition, and his contribution contains much that is admirable and thought-provoking. But there are certain factors which he seems to have either overlooked or abstained from bringing into the overall picture.

To speak of the Globes of the Earth Planetary Chain as re-entering the Sun at the end of the seventh Round, is to disregard the obvious fact that every Planetary Chain—as any other evolving unit—has many re-imbodiments, and these re-imbodiments follow one after the other, with intervening minor Pralayas, while the Elder Brother of the Planets — the Sun — goes through its own life-span, which is of course much longer than the life-spans of the planetary chains. It is only at the expiration of the Sun's own life-span or Manvantaric manifestation, that *all* the planetary chains, having had many re-imbodiments in the meantime, re-enter the Solar Chain, and the Solar System, as such, vanishes from the outer planes of illusion.

But there is something else yet which enters this picture, and must not be lost sight of. It is the fact that the individual globes of a planetary chain evolve and develop upon different sub-planes

of the respective planes upon which they are posited, according to which particular planetary Round we have in mind.

In the first Round, all the Globes evolve on the highest sub-plane of the respective planes which they occupy. In the second Round, on the second sub-plane of the same planes. In the third Round, on the third one. In the fourth Round, on the fourth and *lowest in this downward spiralling*. In the fifth, sixth and seventh Rounds, the Globes evolve again on the third, second and first sub-planes of their respective planes. Therefore, as very correctly pointed out by Brother Fellows, the Globes become more and more spiritual, and *from this angle of view* may be said to approach the Sun again, but only figuratively speaking, as there stretch before them ages yet of progressive re-imbodiments, before the end of the Solar System, as a whole, will have arrived.

The above does not contradict Brother Fellows excellent idea of the interplay of the centrifugal and centripetal forces. It only gives this general idea a slightly different turn, by focusing the attention of the student upon certain other factors which are of primary importance and cannot be ignored in this equation.

Another point of great importance is this: the closer a *physical* globe is to the Central Sun, as we see it, the more advanced it is in its evolutionary stage, in this particular re-imbodiment. To this extent Brother Fellows would have agreed with us. But we should not disregard the obvious fact that, astronomically speaking, the planets far away from the Sun are in very primitive stages of development, while those closer to the Sun seem to be much harder and more material. Astronomy is not mistaken on this point. But it does not know the reason for it. In order to grasp the reason for this fact, one would have to remember that the

age of a planet in its present embodiment is by no means synonymous with its evolutionary standing, its age as an evolving planetary Spirit.

Another interesting factor enters this picture also. It is the teaching, voiced by H.P.B. and the Adepts behind her, that the visible Sun represents or stands for the Kâmic Principle of this system. If so, its influence is very coarse, as compared with the higher potencies behind its visible robes. There is much in this point which could throw light upon the preceding paragraph.

I thought I would jot down the above ideas for whatever worth they may be to you and others.

Cordially yours,

Boris de Zirkoff,
Editor, "Theosophia".

Room 237 Western Bldg.,
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REVIEWS

"PRACTICAL YOGA"

The keynote of every translation of Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms is struck in the rendering of the second verse of Book One. Everything that follows—the translator's rendering of other sutras, his commentaries on them, the style of language he will use, the kind of mind he himself will bring to the problem—is bound up in the answer given by the translator to the primary question "What, after all, is Yoga?" Here as examples are some of the answers given by various translators:

"Yoga is the suppression of the transformations of the thinking principle." Dvivedi.

"Yoga is restraining the mind stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis)". Vivekananda.

"Concentration, or Yoga, is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle". Judge.

"Union, spiritual consciousness, is gained through control of the versatile psychic nature". Johnston.

In Professor Ernest Wood's new book *Practical Yoga* the answer is given forthright, "Yoga is the control of the ideas in the mind" and the expectation which arises on reading this is amply met in the two hundred and forty-five pages of his valuable contribution to Yogic literature; it is all as direct and practical as that key verse.

The author stresses the point that 'control does not mean suppression, but guidance . . . the mere suppression of ideas—not the system of control propounded in the Aphorisms—would be only the concentration of the mind on absence, which would not lead to Yoga.' To those who have considered that one meditates by 'emptying the mind of all thought', the following will be of interest; "Thinking implies control, the temporary stoppage of drift. In yoga we shall learn that there is such a process as complete thinking, which is meditation, and that that leads on to contemplation . . . In Contemplation comes the revelation which we call intuition . . . This happens in Contemplation though we cannot make it happen and cannot watch it happen".

The author mentions three classes of enquirers who approach yoga; first, the men and women who wish to continue the kind of outer life they are now living, who are not seeking the solution of the ultimate mystery of life, but who want to make their own lives stronger, richer, more responsive. The second class wish to develop their latent psychic faculties and powers. The third is composed of the fewer in whom there has arisen the unquenchable thirst for knowledge and to whom all other things are secondary. Yoga can serve all three; it is "realistic, mystical, scientific—realistic in that it insists upon the actual existence of the external world and a

normal valuation of sense-perceptions; mystical in that its aim is to bring its students to a truth beyond the mind; and scientific in that its methods of mental practice and training embody the best psychological knowledge." However, "It is essential in yoga that the pupil must take to it absolutely from an impulse of his own."

One is tempted to quote at length for throughout *Practical Yoga* there are many fertile, evocative ideas which arouse and inspire the mind—but readers will wish to make their own discoveries of its beauty, its spiritual quality and its practicability. They will find that a comparison with other renderings will enable them to appreciate more readily Professor Wood's contribution—and at the same time to estimate more clearly the particular qualities of the other translations.

One departure has been made from the time-honoured arrangement of the text. Verses 17 to 51 of Book One are in the last two chapters, not in the earlier ones. Personally I agree with the author that this re-arrangement preserves the continuity of the exposition of the main theme.

Paul Brunton has contributed an excellent introduction in which he speaks of the vital necessity of 'wedding mysticism to practicality' in this critical age, and says that yoga should be used 'as a help to inspire life, not in the denial of it'. He points out that "the inner stillness that Patanjali calls 'union' is not a final goal but only a background for the goal . . . orthodox yoga quietens the ego but does not kill its dominance". Mr. Brunton states, as Professor Wood has stated in other words, that "The yogi's will can produce the necessary conditions for bringing about a mystical experience but cannot of itself produce the final consummation of that experience. It must be met by a descent of divine Grace, by a

self-revelation from a higher source, if this is to happen". This statement may be contrasted with Mr. Johnston's definition of yoga as given above.

Published by E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, price in Canada \$3.50.

D. W. B.

"ANNIE BESANT CENTENARY BOOK"

It is expected of a memorial volume that it will contain articles in ardent praise of its subject and *The Annie Besant Centenary Book* fully meets this expectation. In such books the articles are not intended to be biographical sketches and any Cromwellian 'wart-and-all' attitude is out of place. Nor are such books intended to be read or reviewed critically. Their function is almost completed when, after the expenditure of much thought, labour and money, they are finally printed and bound, and filed away on library shelves.

This book was prepared under the direction of Dr. James H. Cousins, the Editor; Mr. C. T. Nahciappan was responsible for the excellent layout and design. Twenty-three portraits of Mrs. Besant are reproduced showing her from the age of sixteen onwards. The book is bound in a fine purple cloth with gold thread design; this was woven on the looms of Kalashetra.

There are forty-seven original contributions, and three re-printed articles, one by George Lansbury, one by W. T. Stead, both of whom are now dead and the other by George Bernard Shaw who preferred not to write an original article for the occasion and suggested an earlier article which was used. Shaw, of course, is irrepressible and has the trick of getting to essentials in a single graphic sentence; he says for example that Mrs. Besant 'always came into a movement with a bound and was preaching the new faith before the astonished spectators had the least

suspicion that the old one was shaken'. He is fully appreciative of Mrs. Besant's great capabilities and he speaks of the ties of affection which were formed during the Fabian period and were continued thereafter. Twenty-nine shorter appreciations and a homage in Sanskrit (with English translation by G. Srinivasa Murthi, are also included.

Four articles of Mrs. Besant's are reprinted, first, her 1888 review of *The Secret Doctrine*, which lead her to seek the Teacher, H. P. Blavatsky. This review is a notable work. Mrs. Besant at that time had no knowledge of Theosophy but she showed extraordinary ability in grasping and condensing the scheme of the two large volumes and in intuitively recognizing the world-shaking importance of the work. Her other articles are "The Political Status of Women", "The University of India" and "Woman as Mother". Two extracts from her writings are included, one from her Autobiography which has been given the title of "Annie Wood, Devotee and Artist"; the other extract is from a little known book of hers *Mrs. Besant's Fragmentary Sketches of her Spiritual Pilgrimage* (published 1885). This extract has been titled "Annie Besant, the Budding Orator" and its unconscious revelation of one of the predominating characteristics of her personality will be of interest to students of psychology. It tends to destroy rather than to contribute to the general aim of the book and therefore the reasons for its inclusion are not apparent.

The excellent opening article by the President, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, "The Diamond Soul of Annie Besant" presents the many facets of her life as she moved from Christianity, through Atheism and Freethought with Charles Bradlaugh, to her brilliant and important work with the Fabian Society, then on into Theosophy and then to her work for India. The article unfortunately

contains a schoolboyish poem by Gerald Massey which could very well have been omitted.

A number of prominent men and women of India have contributed able articles speaking in terms of highest praise of Mrs. Besant's character and of her self-sacrificing and inspiring work in helping India to regain political freedom and to restore the full measure of her ancient spiritual greatness. Other articles are from present day members of the Theosophical Society and there is also an article by C. W. Leadbeater and one by Dr. Arundale. All contributors write with sincerity of their impression of one of the most influential women of her times whose character left its unmistakable mark on every movement she joined or started. One must gladly and freely acknowledge that the whole direction of her activities was towards humanitarian and spiritual ideals.

The older members of the Society will recall that the advent of Mrs. Besant to to ranks of the Society when she was one of the world's most brilliant, fearless and compelling orators, was regarded as a most auspicious occurrence. For a few years following the death of H.P.B. The Society, under the guidance of Mrs. Besant and of a number of trained and loyal students of H.P.B.'s, gained and held what was perhaps its peak of influence among western thinkers.

But for many of these older members the tragedy of *The Annie Besant Centenary Book* lies in 'what might have been' and in the names which do not appear.

Published by The Besant Centenary Celebrations Committee; obtainable from The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, India. Price 15 Rupees, approximately \$5.00.

D. W. B.

THE EXILE OF THE SOUL

BY ROY MITCHELL

(Continued from Page 144)

VIII. THE ETHICAL PROBLEM

We get our word 'ethics' (through the latin *ethicus*) from the Greek *ethikos*, that which pertains to *ethos*, character. With the Greeks the word *ethos* had other connotations. It meant custom, usage, native habit, and in its original sense contained also the idea of an accustomed seat or place, a habitat, or primal abode.

As a branch of philosophy ethics concerns itself with the meaning and scope of the words "good" and "bad", "right and wrong", as applied to character and to conduct. The first phase of its enquiry is descriptive. It endeavours to classify thoughts, moods, and actions according to their goodness or badness. In its second phase it determines, if possible, whether the common ideas of goodness and badness and right and wrong reveal any absolute standards of action, or point to any cosmic laws that govern the issues of conduct.

After many centuries during which ethics had been looked upon as purely philosophical in its subject matter and method, enthusiastic scientists of the nineteenth century made an effort to bring it into the fashionable field of positive science, but without notable success.

It should have been evident to the biologists who made the effort that it must end in failure. It inevitably ends in a ring-around-a-rosy. A science is necessarily experimental. Since the results of right and wrong action could be understood only by the experimenter and in his own person—to anyone else or in anyone else they would be mere opinion—he must be, therefore, not only his own laboratory but also his own

judge of results, and he must judge by means of his ethical judgment which is the subject of his experiment.

Worse than this for practical purposes, it is the great defect of all attempts at ethical experiment that the observable consequences of actions are too far removed from their causes in point of time. Indeed the cycle of most important moral operations does not fall within a single lifetime. This makes a positive science of ethics quite impossible for a materialist or a theologian. If the experimenter is a materialist he can have no assurance that the results will show at all before the soul that produced the causes is resolved again into the life force from which it came. The results of most of his experiments must therefore be lost entirely or must be seen in physical descendants, in which case the whole problem is transferred to the field of heredity. An action that will only have its effect in a man's remote descendant is not a matter of active ethical interest, especially if he does not expect to have a descendant. If the experimenter has a predisposition for Christian dogma he is in an equally bad fix. The results of most experiments will only become evident in Heaven or Hell and will not be natural effects on the doer but merely effects manifested in the approval or annoyance of God. The only possible scientific experimenter in ethics would be the theosophist who believes in reincarnation, and he would expect the results to show in a subsequent life and would regard effects in this life as arising out of experimental conduct in previous ones. He would then have two courses of procedure, one would be to set up a

cause and wait patiently for its result with the certainty that by the time he reached his result he would have mislaid his memoranda of the cause. The other would be to develop his memory of the specific causes in previous lives that have given rise to present results. As we shall see there is a simpler method.

It is now generally agreed that ethics had better remain a branch of philosophy.

Philosophy has been defined as "a process of reflection upon the presuppositions involved in unreflective thought". In other words the philosopher turns his attention upon himself to discover how and why his mind does what it does and what are the elements he has all along carried in his mind without thinking of them. He does not deal with new things but with old and previously unobserved things. He sets his own precepts, concepts and processes in new lights and examines them. He seeks merely to become more fully aware of himself.

In logic he examines the processes of reasoning. In epistemology he seeks a theory of knowledge, endeavouring to know how he knows and whence come his ideas. In metaphysics he examines his apprehensions and his conceptions of space, cause, time, and substance. This is the enquiry into what the Greeks called the True—*aletheia*, the unforgettable. In aesthetics he examines his ideas of the Beautiful—*kalos*, excellence of form and motion as embodying interior spiritual function. In ethics he examines his ideas of the Good—*agathon*, that which is firm and secure.

In its first stages ethics is not a philosophy at all. It deals with specific problems such as any man might face in his daily life. "What would be just in this case?" "What, in that case, would excuse one from responsibility?" The power to answer such questions is present with every Ego however little it may

have been exercised. The power grows with use. Presently the first philosophical phases of the subject arise. "Why, given similar cases, should there be so great difference in the answers given by different men?" "Why should the answers vary at all?" "Or, why, indeed, should men, having found an answer to a question proceed to do something contrary to that which they have decided?" "Why should men, desirous of following a certain wrong line of conduct justify their actions by casting doubt upon the authority of the ethical judgment?"

Thus, out of its own contradictions and difficulties, arise ethics as a philosophy. After all it is natural that it should so arise. Ethical philosophy is born of its own disabilities as certainly as a study of health is born of the fact of illness.

All ethical systems belong broadly to two groups. There are those that maintain that the intuitive power of judgment possessed by man is supreme, and a supreme guide to conduct. The others maintain, on one ground or another, that man's ethical judgment is not final but that there are other and external considerations which must guide his actions. These external standards vary. Herbert Spencer tried to erect standards on biological data and failed egregiously. Christian theologians have tried to base standards on an imputed revelation of the dictates of a personal God. Various writers have tried to found systems based on what they claim to be the universal acceptance of certain judgments, social, legal, or political. In view of the fact, however, that each of these systems is finally tested by the author's own ethical judgment and is addressed to the ethical judgment of those who read or study it, we are forced to conclude at last that there is only one valid basis for ethics, that of supreme power of the soul of man to

decide between right and wrong. If a soul deciding for itself addresses to souls deciding for themselves a system of ethics which declares that souls do not decide for themselves, there is something wrong with the system.

One of the great controversies in ethics has revolved around hedonism. The hedonist bases his contention that pleasure is the end of all human effort upon the universally experienced feeling that for a "good" to be good it must in some sense be "my good". The anti-hedonist offers the fulfilment of duty as the true end of effort, arguing that the pleasure of the individual can never be complete in himself.

A multitude of controversies have arisen also out of theology and the effort to place the ideas of an omniscient God above man's interior judgment. The first fallacy of such an external standard for conduct lies in the fact that the ethical judgment is itself superior to the idea of God. Man has never been willing to worship a God who does not fulfil his moral requirements. God is therefore inferior to whatever it is in man that makes ethical judgments. The folly of thinking of a God greater than the maker of Him has led to innumerable contradictions. The most noticeable in its effect on ethics has been that dispute to which I have referred before in these articles, the one about free will and predestination. It is a dispute that never could arise in the realm of pure ethics at all because all the ideas of ethics have to do with free choice between right and wrong and the inalienable right of man to will his own destiny. It is only when theologians have managed to persuade men of the existence of a personal deity who knows everything in advance that anyone will consider even for a moment, the soul as bound to a routine laid down in the mind-made God's foreknowledge.

The central problem of ethics, and the one with which I am especially interest-

ed in this series of articles, is a mystical one. It is the problem of the nature of that mysterious quality in man that makes him the sole and final arbiter of his relation to earth. The primary manifestation of the quality is the operation of Will. The soul of man acts, it refrains from action. It approves, it disapproves. It judges. It may judge rightly or wrongly in any given case but it reserves, for some high reason it does not itself understand, the right to will and to judge.

Emerson's schoolboy with his book of history is in no awe of Napoleon or of Alexander. He arraigns them for every thought, word and deed, he praises, he condemns serenely and without passion. He is their equal, not of this earth but of a higher world than this from which they all three have come. He is one soul appraising another and deciding what he would do—nay, will do—in like case, trying them by a higher criterion than they or he can bring to actuality. So he judges all kings and saints and heroes. His judgments of the event may be faulty, desires may disturb his calm; anger may sweep over him or a chill of fear; his understanding may limp but from his height he decides. He and they are beings superior to earth, walking about fitfully and dimly remembering how Gods should walk.

Plato, in common with all the great occult philosophers, found in this high assumption a demonstration of the state of the soul prior to its original descent into the bondage of earth. Lest I be accused of twisting Plato's doctrine to my needs let me offer a summary in the words of the late Dr. Henry Sidgwick:

"... If the objects of abstract thought constitute the real world, of which this world of individual things is but a shadow, it is plain that the highest, most real life *must lie in the former region and not in the latter*. It is in contemplating the abstract reality

which concrete things obscurely exhibit, the type or ideal which they imperfectly imitate, that the true life of the mind in man must consist; and as man is most truly man in proportion as he is mind, the desire of one's own good, which Plato, following Socrates, held to be permanent and essential in every living thing, becomes in its highest form the philosophical yearning for knowledge. This yearning, he held, springs—like more sensual impulses—from a sense of *want of something formerly possessed, of which there remains a latent memory in the soul*, strong in its proportion to its philosophic capacity; hence it is that in learning any abstract truth by scientific demonstration, we merely make explicit what we already know; we bring into clear consciousness hidden memories of a state in which the soul looked upon Reality and Good face to face, *before the lapse that imprisoned her in an alien body*, and mingled her true nature with fleshly feelings and impulses."

Sidgwick gives here the impression, frequent in modern philosophical writings, that Plato's Reality and Good are the ultimate Reality and Good. It is evident from Plato himself and from the Neo-Platonists that they were only comparative and that they do not in any sense embrace the entire scale of knowledge, but only an octave above and beyond the present octave of mind, namely, that subtle but none the less material plane the Eastern writers call Buddhi. It was the realm of the Christos in the Gnostic systems. This interior world which the soul has lost, Plato and his followers regarded as one in which our now separated souls must be re-integrated into a unity we once enjoyed but have lost owing to the delusions of earth. The re-awakening of the soul of man is for Platonists, a return to that Unity. This is the One of Plotinos, and as I have already suggested, it is the One which Christian

theologians disfigured into their ultimate and all-knowing God.

Conceiving the race of men here upon earth as disintegrated and scattered fragments of that Unity, but essentially bound, each to the others, we have a clue to the truth about that other great crux of ethics—duty. This is the one which Kant called the greatest of mysteries. It is the ethical factor we saw the hedonist rejecting when he said, "That is not good which is not *my* good." The exponent of duty is a believer, however dimly he may see it, in the lost Unity, and he says, "Good can only be *our* good." There can be no good which omits any of the exiled race. They must go through together.

The concept of duty—that which one owes—is, then, a blurred recollection of the essential fact of existence in the One. This is the only valid explanation of the constantly recurring intuition that can impel a man to an act of sacrifice which he cannot justify by any process of mind. Hedonism is of the mind; duty is a reminiscence of the lost world beyond mind, and mind has been called always the great slayer of the real. The concept of justice is an archetypal idea from that lost world, as are the concepts of love, philosophy, mathematics and the yearning for beauty.

The differences between the souls of men in this world are not, therefore, to be explained as differences of development or as varying accretions of powers. They can only be explained as varying degrees of loss of divine self-consciousness. This is the only adequate explanation of the differences in the clarity of ethical judgment. Failure of judgment does not come of inadequate development but of overclouding. The will to act, the arrogation of the right to decide are of the divine soul and are common to all men. The failure to judge wisely comes of the obscuring forces of an alien earth.

(To Be Continued)