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PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF H. P. B.

BY ESTHER WINDUST

Each year, as the month of May approaches, our thoughts go back full of love and gratitude to our great Leader who brought us the Light, and who left us in May 1891, or rather who left our view.

Gone, she is not at all, and it is always a joy to me to observe how many there are still who think of her and therefore come into the opportunity to be helped on by her. Her gratitude comes to all who try to spread Theosophy and to work impersonally for humanity. I have met many to whom she has become a Light in life though they had never seen her, neither had they come into contact with the small circle of men who were round her in her last years of life.

Personally I am very grateful that I have known them all, and many have remained my intimate friends till their death. The fact that we had known H. P. B. and loved her proved to be a strong link.

The first time that I saw her has made an ineffaceable impression on me. An acquaintance invited me to go with her to a meeting of members and associates to Avenue Road, London. It was a

regular evening meeting, but my friend had asked for an admission ticket. "One should see this woman" she said, "as there is told so much about her, good and bad, but most people look on her as a fraud."

So I went—without much enthusiasm—to see an interesting woman, and with a strong resolution to look well out of my eyes! She was indeed a remarkable woman!

The hall was not full, and we sat more or less in the middle and could well see the podium on which stood two easy chairs, and at the side a stand for the speaker. Soon two ladies appeared, Mrs. Besant, who shortly before had become president of the Blavatsky Lodge, and another lady, not tall, but stout. "Look, that must be Mme. Blavatsky" whispered my cicerone. I could only say "Sh", and pulled a little away. To speak seemed sacrilege.

I had seen many people in many lands, stars in their own firmament, art, theatre, politics, literature, etc.—but this—never! This small, simple woman with a shawl on her shoulders, who filled the big chair, looked smaller than she was because of her stout body,

which, as I learned later, was the result of an accident with a carriage some years previously. But at that moment I only saw her face with those clear, blue eyes, and the hands on the lap. I studied art at that time, and never in my life had I seen such perfect hands. But this was not even of so much importance. What overwhelmed me was the force and the impersonal love that surrounded her and radiated from her, and which gave me the impression of moving, flimsy light in which faces and forms appeared and disappeared, and even scenes that came up and then disappeared again. Later, much later, I believe, I recognized many of those faces. I knew nothing then of Auras, and sat looking, fascinated. I knew then that I sat in the presence of someone greater, enormously greater, than ever I had dreamt.

Scenes out of Egypt appeared and disappeared, and also from other Southern or Eastern countries, which I had never seen. I remember that I thought of her as a living Sphinx, in contact, conscious intimate contact, with the occult Mysteries of the olden time. The Light remained, though the mysterious images of persons dissolving changed. I had never seen such a thing, and the impression was formidable. I heard little of the lecture. Walter Old, whom later I knew well, gave a lecture about the Sun, and after the lecture one could put questions, and when the audience did not do it, the speaker himself put questions to H. P. B.

Later I attended many lectures, but that one remains for me a landmark. I joined the Theosophical Society and became a member of the Blavatsky Lodge, but my life was changed, it could not be the same. I had had a look into another world. Had I not been so impossibly shy, I would have written to H.P.B. and visited her to put questions. But I did not dare, and when I had to go to the

continent some months later, I was very glad to get an invitation to come to Avenue Road that gave me the opportunity to take leave of her before my departure to France. But once in the room I took a chair near the door. When H.P.B. came in I was very glad, but could only sit and look, overwhelmed at the remembrance of what I had seen that first evening, and now by the feeling of the enormous majesty of that small figure, the Messenger sent out by the Great White Lodge to bring help to the suffering humanity of the West.

I believe that I would have remained sitting in that chair till the end of the evening, without saying a word to any one, if a rescuing angel in the form of Countess Wachtmeister had not come to me and, with a soft urge, I nearly said "force", had taken me with her to talk to H.P.B.

When at last I took leave, very much under the impression of her charm, she looked at me with kind eyes and said, after the good wishes for the journey: "Come to see us as soon as you get back!" I was delighted, and at the same time on the point of tears, for I knew at once that I would never see her again in that body, and all that I could say was: "I will come back" and I ran home, for I did not understand anything of it.

Not long afterwards I asked to be admitted to her inner group of pupils, and how glad I was when I knew she accepted me as a pupil. I got regular teaching by correspondence, but the inner side was of inestimable value to me. When I got the paper about the Oath of Secrecy of the occult teaching, in which loyalty to the School and to the T.S. is promised, I remember that I kept the paper in my hand and looked at a big portrait of her and asked: "Oh! H. P. B. shall I be able to keep that Oath?" It seemed as if the portrait became alive and to stand before the frame I

saw her blue eyes looking at me, and her own voice said: "The God within you strengthen thee to keep it!"

I knew that I took that Oath not only for this, but also for all coming lives till the goal will be reached. H.P.B. was, is, and remains for me a living Force in the life, and it is a joy to me to record a little of my high esteem for that great woman, to whom we Theosophists owe so much.

Very much has been written in the last years about her travels, her relations, her much moved life, and each earnest member of the T.S. can read it and learn much from it.

I was asked to give in this article, if possible, something of personal impressions, otherwise I would not have spoken so much about my first impressions. When she spoke, there were always many listeners, who were invisible to the many. For she was nearly always surrounded by Chelas, and as one can see from the reminiscences of Countess Wachtmeister and others, there were also often High Beings, Masters, in her neighbourhood. Once when Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was there in a small group of students, she noticed a chela, whom she had never seen before. She drew the turban that he wore, and took the paper to H.P.B. who said smiling: "Yes, he was there this evening!" But often when Mrs. C. O. looked at one or another, H.P.B. called her to attention: "Look at me, I am the one who is teaching now!" For H. P. B. had of

course many pupils, chelas whom she taught on another plane, and who often came to listen when she spoke to her Western pupils. Countess Wachtmeister was very clairvoyant, the only other one who could see clearly was Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, and at the end Mrs. Besant.

These two of course got more intense training than the others, to be ready, as much as possible, to teach others if H.P.B. had to go.

Once H.P.B. complained: "Now that is fine! I get a scolding because I am so severe with you", and she told us that a chela had come to her quite sad, and had asked: "What is the matter? I went to Annabai—Mrs. Besant—and she was weeping in her room, then I went to Bella-bai (Mrs. C.O.) and she was on her bed, also weeping!" The Path of Discipleship is difficult as is known. It means the quicker transmutation of our personal faults, so that they may not be an obstacle for the coming through of the Force that is used to help Humanity. Once More Honour to Her who brought the Light.

(The above article was written for the magazine *Theosophische Bewegung*, Rotterdam, in 1938. The translation was sent recently by a friend in England to Mrs. N. Dalzell of Edmonton Lodge, who kindly passed it on for reprinting in the magazine. We were delighted to have it for this May issue.)

Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, while the Theosophical Society is only a visible bubble on that reflection. Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent. Theosophy, finally, is the fixed eternal sun, and its Society, the evanescent comet trying to settle in an orbit to become a planet, ever revolving within the attraction of the sun of truth.

—Key to Theosophy, page 57.

BLAVATSKY WAS AN OPTIMIST

BY CECIL WILLIAMS

I. The Mysterious Nidanas

The Blessed Lord Buddha is said to have traced all our woes back to Ignorance, the Sanskrit word being Avidya. This is a generic term having many meanings: lack of knowledge, lack of discrimination, lack of insight, among others.

Because of Avidya we do not do the things we ought to do and do the things we ought not to do. But if because of Avidya we are stupid, it is through Avidya we become wise. Avidya is the cause of misery, true, but it also is the cause of joy. This is an occult teaching at which H.P.B. broadly hinted.

To justify the thesis we have to examine the twelve concatenations of causes, called the Nidanas, which begin, as Buddha is said to have given them, with Ignorance and end with Despair. As usually presented they are, I suspect, incomprehensible to the ordinary student if he be unable to apply to them analogies from the Laws of Thought and to compare the Buddhist terms with the familiar Theosophical ones.

For convenience in this exposition I list the Nidanas below, putting together the Sanskrit words given in *The Theosophical Glossary* and translations of these terms by K.H. (*Mahatma Letters*, x):

1. Avidya: Ignorance.
2. Samskara: productions of body, of speech, of thoughts.
3. Vijnana: consciousness.
4. Namarupa: name and form.
5. Chadayatana: the six regions of the senses.
6. Sparsa: contact.
7. Vedana: sensation.
8. Trishna: thirst or desire.
9. Upadana: attachment.

10. Bhava: existence.

11. Jati: birth.

12. Jaramarana: old age, death, lamentation, suffering, dejection and despair.

The explanations challenge the intuition, but to the average person they are not very edifying. For what are "productions of body, of speech, of thought," and what is meant by "name and form"? Again, as we find Vijnana translated "perfect knowledge" in the *Glossary*, how on earth can "perfect knowledge" be the result of increasing ignorance?

The following interpretation will, I trust, throw some light upon this obscure subject.

Avidya is almost synonymous with Maya or Illusion, being illusion looked at subjectively. Both being generic terms they apply to the whole of manifestation. But at the beginning, as the First Cause, Avidya is far removed from the stupidity and nescience that trouble mortals.

As the first cause Avidya is ignorance only in contrast with the Awareness, inconceivable to us, that is termed Nirvana, as Maya is illusion in opposition to an, at present, incogitable, if logically necessary Reality. Avidya as the first Nidana is that "condition of pure awareness" which Kurt F. Lie-decker gives as one of its meanings.

What is it that is aware?

This Seer I conceive to be Purusha, the Monad (objectively, Atma-Buddhi), who leaving Nirvana for Avidya, Pralaya for Manvantara, is aware with a different kind of awareness to that in the state of Nirvana.

Of what is it aware?

By analogy with the genesis of all truly logical thought, it is conscious of

the three principles which govern all manifested nature: (1) the inclusion of All in the One; (2) the pairs of opposites; (3) cycles. These are embraced in the second and third postulates of *The Secret Doctrine*.

This "condition of pure consciousness" suffices by a magnetic effect to call into objectivity out of the slumbering Prakriti, out of the Eternal Mother called Space, the germs of the prior manvantaric consciousness or activities of the monad. These are the Samskaras, "the germs of propensities and impulses," three in nature as demanded by triune law of manifestation. From the viewpoint of the monad these "propensities", these principles-in-action, are the Samskaras; looked at objectively, they are the gunas of the Samkhya system.

"Now the New Year reviving old Desires,

The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires."

that is, it enters a state of Oneness. For the third Nidana, Vijnana (objectively, Buddhi-Manas), which follows as the result of the rebirth of the Samskaras is, as the *Glossary* defines it, "perfect knowledge of every perceptible thing and of all objects in their concatenation and unity." This is subjectively regarded. Objectively, it is the Higher Ego, corresponding in the thought processes of the human mind with an abstract or general idea.

Vijnana is cosmic consciousness, corresponding at this stage with the prevision of the Ego at the beginning of each incarnation.

From Vijnana there proceeds Namarupa, the fourth Nidana. The root translation, "a name and a form," suggests its meaning. Nama, a name, is a word; a word, a vibration; vibration, e-motion. Rupa, a form, is an eidolon, a concrete thought. In short, Namarupa corresponds to Kama-Manas.

In the Buddhist subjective system only the duality is mentioned, but in Theosophical teaching two other elements are added: Prana and Linga Sharira, for Namarupa is the personality, the Lower Ego. In thought this corresponds with the controversial middle term of the logicians.

The Nidanas should really be fourteen and here it is possible to discern where a beat has been skipped. Between Namarupa and Chadayatana, which term comprises the six senses (the sixth being mental perception) there should stand the seventh sense. K.H. hints as much in the context to the above-mentioned translation, but here we fringe the truly occult. In human thought the seventh sense is analogous to the concrete idea.

Parenthetically, omitting Avidya, which is a generic term, we can place against the descending Nidanas the following numbers:

Three: Samskara.

One: Vijnana.

Four: Namarupa.

One: The seventh sense.

Six: Chadayatana.

Thus we have Pi, 3.1416, the relation of the diameter of a circle to its circumference, a subject on which Blavatsky has some cryptic comments in *The Secret Doctrine*, particularly in the second commentary of the fifth stanza of Volume I.

The examination of the succeeding Nidanas need only be short. Through the six senses contact (Sparsa) is made with the physical world, which induces sensation (Vedana), each sensation being ephemeral, not only because the object contacted is transitory, but because the contacting organs themselves undergo change.

The sensation, however, arouses desire (Trishna) either to experience that sensation again, if pleasurable, or to avoid it, if painful. The objects or ex-

periences desired or shunned, exerting a magnetic pull upon Trishna (objectively, lower Kama) there results Upadana or attachment to cyclic existence. Thus caught in Bhava, the wheel of reincarnation, there follow successively in time Jati (birth) and Jaramarana (death), which latter term is made to include all the painful experiences of life in the physical body.

The descent of the monad is, in the chain of causation called the Nidanas, perhaps oversimplified. At any rate it is reduced to its simplest terms, for the process is in reality of a complexity inconceivable to us as even a superficial reading of *The Secret Doctrine* shows.

Now it is obvious that at the end the argument is slanted, that is, it is given a propagandist twist. We could quite readily slant it the other way, and say that from Bhava there follows: youth, devachan, rejoicing, pleasure, courage, and hope. Thus the Nidanas, beginning with Avidya, can be made to end with hope instead of despair.

In each case a one-sided picture of life is given, my suspicion being that an original realistic conclusion, embracing both the joys and sorrows of life, was altered by over-zealous followers.

The Buddhists have the reputation of being logicians and if we could follow the argument of the Nidanas with sufficient understanding we would realize that the first Nidana coming into existence the others necessarily follow in the order given.

The conclusion to be drawn from this argument is that pain being a necessary condition of existence, to end it we must destroy Avidya, the first Nidana or cause.

As this, it is acknowledged, is possible only for the superhuman Brahamana, the argument would have no practical value for us whatsoever were it not

for the fact that there exist degrees of Avidya or Ignorance and that we can begin immediately, if we will, to dispel the lower or darker of these.

But what is the purpose of all these woes of ours? Did we come into existence merely to suffer and to be tantalized by ephemeral joys. Has existence, Avidya, Maya, no value? Is escapism, the flight of Nirvana, the noblest philosophy that occultism has to offer?

(To Be Continued)

REASON FOR EXISTENCE

Besides the world or aggregate of finite things we find a certain Unity which is dominant, not only in the sense in which the soul is dominant in me, or rather in which the self or *I* is dominant in my body, but also in a much more exalted manner. For the dominant Unity of the universe not only rules the world, but also constructs or makes it; and it is higher than the world and, if I may so put it, extramundane; it is thus the ultimate reason of things. Now neither in any one single thing, nor in the whole aggregate and series of things, can there be found the sufficient reason of existence.—*Leibniz*.

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.

NOTES BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I have very heartening reports from our lodges in Vancouver in regard to the recent visit of Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn who gave a series of lectures there at our instigation. Here is one account which I think will prove of interest: "Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn has just left Vancouver after giving a group of three splendid lectures in the Medical Dental Auditorium under the auspices of the Orpheus and Vancouver Lodges. Dr. Kuhn's deep, scholarly knowledge of Theosophy was recognised, and much appreciated by both members and visitors on each occasion, and brought forth many questions after the lectures. It greatly encourages the two lodges mentioned, to know there are still such able students and lecturers for Theosophy as Dr. Kuhn. His visit brought back the memory of other such, never to be forgotten grand workers for the Society as Albert Smythe, Chas. Lazenby and Roy Mitchell. We feel Dr. Kuhn is doing an outstanding work for Theosophy, both in the United States and Canada along the line of the Second Object of the Society, and while he carried with him our personal thanks when he left, we also wish him continued success in his endeavours for the Great Cause wherever he may travel".

* * * *

My mail bag during the past month has been most prolific and included a long letter from Dr. Shearman, Presidential Agent of the T.S. in Northern Ireland in which he gives a cheering statement of the progress of the Society

in that part of the world and closes in sending "the very best wishes of the Ulster members to the Society in Canada, and that this year will be full of happiness and opportunity and progress in the great work". I also received a letter from the Secretary of the Peace Lodge of the T.S. Hyde, Cheshire, England and a photograph of the Mayor and Mayoress of that city in full regalia signing the Visitors' Book on an official visit to the Lodge and how they invited the Lodge to hold a public meeting in the Mayor's Parlour, which turned out to be a great success. It is good to know that the Society is being officially recognised thus and we wish our brothers over there every success. Other cheerful notes are the reports I have had from our lodges in Edmonton and Montreal. Altogether a very satisfying month.

* * * *

I regret to announce that we have lost two of our members recently, the deceased are, Mr. Ronald Tritton, of Iron Bridge, Ontario and Mr. Clark T. Purvis of Toronto — both members of the Toronto Lodge. Our sympathy and condolences are extended to the families of both in their sad bereavement.

* * * *

In the February issue of this, our official organ, there was a special notice "The Annual Elections" printed in which I requested Secretaries of Lodges to see that the matter was brought before their respective lodges and when Nominations were made to send them to me before the 1st of April. I regret to state I had to send telegrams at much expense to several lodges in order to obtain the information required. This should not be necessary and I hope that in future those concerned will look upon such notices with the importance they deserve.

E. L. T.

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OFFICE NOTES

"*Through Temple Doors, Studies in Occult Masonry*", by the late Roy Mitchell, has been receiving very favourable reviews in the Theosophical magazines. The latest review we noted was in *Theosophy in Ireland* in which the book was well recommended. On sale by the Blavatsky Institute, 52 Isabella St., Toronto 5, Ont.; price, paper bound \$1.00, cloth bound \$1.50.

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Some months ago we acknowledged receipt of a small booklet, *Thus Spake the Mahatma*, containing quotations from the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and published by M. K. Krishnan, Coimbatore, India. A Toronto member, Mr.

Henry S. Saunders read the announcement and borrowed the booklet. Mr. Saunders has a hobby, bookbinding, in which he is an expert. This week the little booklet was returned, very neatly bound in cloth. We are grateful for this kindness, and the book is ready for other readers. Mr. Saunders also typed out copies of the booklet and bound the sheets in book form. There are on sale at \$1.50. There is also for sale a number of Whitman items which were collected and bound by Mr. Saunders, who has been a Whitman student for many years and was very active in the Whitman Club, Toronto. Prices and particulars of these items may be obtained from Mr. Saunders at 63 Fernwood Park Ave., Toronto 8.

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Mrs. N. W. J. Haydon would like to dispose of the numerous Theosophical and Masonic books which had been collected by her late husband. A number of volumes have already been purchased by the Toronto Lodge Library and by The Travelling Library; others were purchased by the Book Concern for resale. But a number of books remain, including some unbound volumes of Lucifer and a number of spare copies of the monthly issues, of both before and after H.P.B.'s death.

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The threatened Chinese invasion of Tibet seems to have dropped out of the news. Speculations have appeared in Theosophical magazines as to what steps the Masters might take in the event of Chinese domination of that country. Are we sure that there are Masters in Tibet? Some years ago, Mr. James Pryse reported that H.P.B. told him that the Masters were leaving Tibet, and that within a few years all would be gone.

REVIEW

The Divine Vagabond by Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, is the work of a poet who gives us the age-old wisdom in verse forms which are familiar to us. Western conventional rhythms and patterns have been used to give us that wisdom we expect from the East, and here once again we have from the Orient a very profound message of personal faith in the divine vagabond within every man.

This faith finds its fullest expression, I think, in the last two poems of the book. In particular I like "The Secret Link", it has such a perfect moral for this modern world. The same universalism obviously inspired "Light Divine" and "Masterhood".

The technique is light, the language controlled, perhaps too controlled, but the deep chord of wisdom is here, the introspective and profound. There is however, a naivete that annoys occasionally as in the poem beginning, "My song is her song, I didn't know it, I didn't know so long I was her poet." The imagery is nearly always most effective, however, as in "Transfiguration".

"See how the myriad boats of lives are
tossed

Upon the whirl of uncontrolled pleasure
Since, through long storms of selfhood,
they have lost

The secret of the ocean and its measure.
Keen youth leaps timeless out of time
grown old,

Red springtide is an essence in the
blood

And what was grey and barren turns to
gold

And what was desert soil begins to
bud."

Lovely lines indeed—they permit us to see with perfect clarity the divine vagabond within each one gaining experience unto light.

It is no wonder that our President, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, has written a most informative Foreword to this work, and we are grateful that it was produced under the auspices of The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. We hope they will introduce more Indian Poets like Mr. Chattopadhyaya to the Western world for we need their inspiration.

H. L. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

In reference to the article "Binding the Pleiades" (March issue) a valued correspondent writes, among other things:

"It always amazes me that nearly everyone seems to think that there *must* come a time on earth, when the lion will lie down with the lamb 'and everything will be at peace.' Of course it is the result of the teachings of pseudo-christianity being taken literally. The last seventeen hundred years have produced nothing but—in the west—a class of slave to hope deferred. An impotent race of servers that have to be coddled and coaxed so as to enable them to breathe at all, and lacking any iota of virility. Some time in the future the clouds will pass away—all wars will be at an end—everyone will be unselfish and charitable—everyone will love (sic!) everyone else—and so on ad nauseum. Ye Gods! such an era would be like nothing but Heaven inhabited solely by *good* people."

"Why cannot it be generally known that badness, evil, wickedness, lust, selfishness, deviltry, and the thousand and one other vices only exist, and must exist, to bring us to an awareness of His unspeakable splendour? The fact that no two things can be alike in this vale of tears, makes the weaving of the pattern so fascinating and delightful. Does not the Book of the Law say: For I am divided for love's sake, for the chance

of Union? (1.29) and are we not told: 'Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing and any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt.' (1.22) Elsewhere it has been said 'Judge not . . .' I think that the greatest Light to descend upon mankind at this time, is a general realization that one *never* dies, that one always *is* and lives *eternally*. If this were *known*, there would be more laying up of treasure in heaven. It is only because our statesmen (sic!) live at the most for three score years and ten, that posterity is burdened with debts that can never be paid. Imagine if they realised that they had to live until the debts were paid! As of course they do!"

PSYCHISM AND MEDIUMSHIP

Summary of Discussion held during the 1950 Convention of The Theosophical Society in the British Isles.

The Theosophical Research Center organized a meeting on the above title at Convention, which took the form of questions asked by Mr. Leslie Leslie-Smith, with unrehearsed answers given informally by Dr. and Mrs. L. J. Bendit. Mrs. Adelaide Gardner was in the chair. The following is a brief digest of the hour's talk.

Psychism is now described by psychological research students as extrasensory perception. This indicates the ability to get to know something about the world outside oneself, at the physical or any other level, by means other than the five senses. The psyche or soul may be defined in theosophical terms as *kamamānas*, or the thinking-feeling principle. The word *medium* is generally used to describe one who brings communications from the dead. In theosophical studies we distinguish between a psychic and a medium, although in one sense everyone is a medium, because everyone of us is constantly responding to the influences of the invisible worlds.

The typical medium works through the sympathetic nervous system, usually receiving impressions through the solar plexus chakram. This can be called negative, or purely receptive psychism, since it is not controlled by a clear mind. The conscious and trained psychic uses the *ajna* or brow chakram, and controls his experiences with his conscious mind. The negative psychic brings the force in and up, the positive brings it down and out.

Mediumship can be described as a leaning backward into the unconscious psychism of the racial past, while positive psychism is a forward development, because in future races it will be usual for all to receive conscious impressions from within—that is, to develop positive extrasensory perception. Primitive people possess a natural mediumistic psychism, without being able to control or explain it. They "just know" psychically, and are often terrified of their inexplicable non-physical perceptions.

Dr. and Mrs. Bendit have recently done a certain amount of deliberate investigation of present-day mediumship. In general their opinion was that—while apparently a deliberate impulse had been given to psychic phenomena towards the end of the last century, presumably so that it might attract the attention of scientific investigators—mediumship as practiced today is much less evidential than at that period, and is far less convincing. None of it has in any way the status of the well trained mediumship and seership practiced in the Temples of Egypt and Chaldea in the olden times.

As to the claim that disembodied human beings, purporting to be certain personalities, actually are present in the seance room, there is little or no evidence nowadays that would substantiate such a claim. Mrs. Bendit spoke of her early experience in a psychic bureau, where she attended literally hundreds of

seances, as the representative of the bureau on the organization side. With this as background and the recent re-investigation, she would say that certainly not more than two or three per cent of the phenomena were what they claimed to be. The "communications" produced were usually a curious jumble of vivid thought forms picked up by the medium, usually quite unconsciously, from the group aura of the sitters. The formation of this group aura is a psychic fact of great importance, and needing careful and unbiased study. It makes available to the medium deeply unconscious material from the minds of the sitters, if that material happens to fit in with the desired communication. One must state, however, that most of the mediums are genuinely unconscious of all this, and do their best, without being aware of misleading their sitters. Only after long and painstaking training is it possible to distinguish between a dead person, a thought form, and a person who is asleep or under an anesthetic.

The higher psychism is a natural faculty, now latent, that will sooner or later be awakened in humanity. The best preparation for it is to study carefully the structure and functions of ordinary human consciousness, as put forward in Theosophy. This forms an excellent background for further growth. To understand how human consciousness works one must observe both oneself and others, very impersonally. Impersonality is one of the great assets for accurate psychic observation. With knowledge and impersonality as necessary background, one may then observe one's growing reactions to impacts from within, and—through trial and error—gradually learn to distinguish such things as definite thought forms emanating from elsewhere, as compared with those which are the product of one's own imagination. This is

the difference between psychic and psychological experience. Psychic knowledge or communications relate to impacts from without our own psyche; psychological impressions arise from within our own minds and feelings.

Psychical research has as yet no precise explanation of telepathy. All that has been established is that there is such a thing as communication between mind and mind. If a clear feeling or thought is sent out by A, and B has a receptive mental field, B may register the impact of A's thought. From the theosophical view, telepathy can take place at any level, etheric, emotional, mental, spiritual.

Psychic phenomena run from the etheric to the middle mental level, the whole range of the psyche in man, but are mainly mental-emotional. Interest in psychic experience is likely to interfere, rather than forward, spiritual development, for psychics are hyper-sensitive, and often unstable. It is rare for a person to be psychic and stable at the same time.

We are fortunate in that the most sound training for psychic development is just our well-known theosophical training, leading to a clearer perception of reality. We have, first, to learn about our own nature, its mechanisms and automatic tendencies. To do this is a great step forward, and the task is the same for all. Then we can examine our own intuitive "hunches" and check up on them. For this we need the quiet mind and genuine impersonality.

The great occultists are in direct touch with the forces in nature, and learn to command them. When consciousness is centered at the spiritual level these forces become as objective as the physical phenomena of electricity. Such spiritual perception lies quite outside the personal nature, but it is there in the future for us all. When now and then a "plus" quantity comes into per-

sonal experience, a something special that changes us profoundly, that is spiritual experience.

—*Theosophical News & Notes.*

TWO MAGAZINES

Two magazines have been received from India with a request for comments.

The Young Theosophist, official journal of The All-India Federation of Young Theosophists, is edited by Mr. V. Gopalang, General Secretary of the Federation. It is encouraging to note that in India and elsewhere there are sufficient numbers of young persons in the movement to form distinctive organizations through which youth can express itself. The young men and women coming into the movement now, may be the leaders of the future.

Mr. Gopalang and Mr. Milton Thornton in their articles speak of qualities usually associated with youth, enthusiasm, idealism, vitality, and of youth's desire to translate into action the vision which youth sees so clearly. Mr. Peter Hoffman, whose address to the inaugural meeting of The Jyoti Youth Lodge is printed, mentions the "burning enthusiasm for the magnificent ideals of Theosophy which only the young can hold within their breasts"—a statement with which we must disagree. We do not know why the article, "The Creation of Man" was reprinted from *Magazine Digest*; surely our young theosophists have not become cynical misogynists so early in life!

Youth, with all its vim, vigour and vitality, with all its possibilities of vision and enthusiasm, is often a period of obsession by a conformity complex—a horror of being different in any respect from others of the same age group. Even young persons in universities conform with the current idiosyncracies of their groups; in class-work, it is only the exceptional individual who rebels against the regimentation of mind which goes on there. Con-

formity and regimentation are not desirable in the Theosophical Movement. The Master K.H. wrote: "we do not require a passive mind, but on the contrary are seeking for those most active, which can put two and two together once they are on the right scent".

We send best wishes to *The Young Theosophist* and sincerely hope that it will make an important contribution to the Movement by encouraging young people to 'think through' Theosophy for themselves, to become independent in their approach, and to be original and creative in the expression of their ideas.

Mira (East & West) is a well printed magazine of thirty-six pages and is the monthly Journal of the Mira Movement in Education. The Movement, which was founded by Sri T. L. Vaswani, seeks to interpret Indian culture, to study the 'Religions of the Spirit' as reflected in the lives of mystics and in the scriptures of humanity, to express Humanitarianism and the ideals of Education. A number of the articles in the February issue of the Magazine are by Sri T. L. Vaswani and these reflect his eclectic approach and his spirit of devotion to humanity.

The St. Mira's High School, Poona, India, was founded with the aim of recovering and restoring the ancient Indian ideals of education and of infusing the work of educating the young with those spiritual ideals which have been India's glory. "If the school is not a temple, it is a den". It seeks to evoke the creative principle in the student through a process of 'dehypnotisation'—to break the enchantment of personality-allurement, to put away the mask of unreality and to reach out to the Real. The emphasis of the School is laid upon the atmosphere in which the work is conducted, sympathy, reverence for life, simplicity, and purity of mind and body.

The work is highly spoken of by educationalists of East and West.

THE YEARS OF THE LOCUST

No man can say, as the Lord said to the prophet Joel, "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten", yet it always remains for men and women to look back upon the past and to so act in the present that past mistakes may not be repeated and the detriment of past errors may be restored.

May 8th 1951 is the first White Lotus Day in the new cycle of the Theosophical Movement and is a fitting time to emphasize the universality of the Movement and to consider what means, if any, may be employed to re-unite its fragmented body. We have in the world today three principal Theosophical Societies and several smaller independent Societies, each with its own organization and branches. Each alleges that it is devoted to the first object of the Movement, the formation of a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, but apparently for one reason or another, each prefers to live in its own little shop, having nothing to do with the firm next door!

H. P. Blavatsky whose memory is especially revered on this day, hoped that the self-sacrificing efforts which she had made on behalf of humanity, would result in the twentieth century in "a numerous and united body of people ready to welcome the new torch-bearer of Truth" towards the close of this century. Are we to say that that hope was unjustified, utterly incapable of fulfillment?

The years of the locust swept down upon the Theosophical Movement around 1895 and the one united body was fragmented. Wm. Q. Judge has been blamed for the initial disruption but it is clear that he intended that the separated organization of American Theosophists which he headed, was to remain affiliated with the Society at

Adyar through mutual assistance and co-operative work. He contemplated the formation of various independent societies as geographical and other considerations warranted, but all these separated groups were to be allied to each other in much the same manner as the various groups in Masonry. Is there anything basically wrong in that idea? H.P.B. had proclaimed it long before Mr. Judge did—and many years after Mr. Judge's death, the various national Sections in the Adyar Society were declared to be independent and autonomous bodies. This declaration was not implemented by the necessary amendments to and revisions of the bylaws and rules of the Society and the National Societies are still bound by the Adyar Constitution—a matter which has resulted in rather involved legal steps being taken by some societies to ensure to their members complete independence to deal with real and personal property of the lodges. This however, is by the way. Mr. Judge's vision of a more democratic organization was not acceptable to those who at that time believed in one supreme central authority at Headquarters—an idea which today would be labelled 'totalitarian'.

This matter has been commented on in several Theosophical magazines in the past few months. *Eirenicon*, Peace Lodge, Hyde, England, says,

"We agree with the United Lodge that the past has not gone, for its consequences remain. We hold too that those consequences must be rectified if the Theosophical Movement is to have plentitude of power, and there is time in which to do it and produce a really unified Movement by 1975; but it will take time for the cleavages are deepseated and will need unhurried examination in an atmosphere of unprejudiced good-

will. Years of quiet, persistent work will probably be called for before the process of gradual growing together begins to be overwhelming in its impetus. That can happen, but not by isolation, separateness — only by meeting, interchanging and seeking a true alignment with the Original Programme by all bodies in the Movement. It CAN happen. Whether it Does happen depends on US. Why not start?"

Our readers will have noted the remarks on this subject by Mr. Jinarajadasa, President of the Adyar Society (see C.T. March 1951). Mr. Jinarajadasa refers to the Adyar Society as the "Parent Society" which is fair enough if Mr. Jinarajadasa means that the headquarters at Adyar is a sort of "Parent" to the various National Societies within the Adyar Group. But Adyar is not the "Parent" of either the United Lodge of Theosophists or The Theosophical Society (Covina). The President pays tribute to the other Societies saying, 'all work devotedly for the ideals of Theosophy', but he is not enamoured with the idea of any amalgamation. "I personally see no disadvantage in the existence of many Theosophical Societies. Seeing that human nature is what it is, invariably swayed by loyalties to certain leaders, those loyalties will not be abolished by any kind of union among the different groups." What about the higher loyalty to the Idea? If members of the Theosophical Societies are persons whose loyalty to a 'leader' is higher than loyalty to the Universal Idea of the Theosophical Movement, then certainly nothing can be done until this present generation of Theosophists passes away or changes its attitude. But the President may be unaware of how widespread this Higher Loyalty is, in the Adyar Society itself and among members of other Societies and the many, many independent students who recog-

nize that loyalty to a leader has been the bane of many Theosophical organizations.

Theosophical Notes for February 1951, says, "Strangers are attracted by the philosophy of brotherhood; and one of the first things they encounter is a job lot of Theosophists either damning one another with faint praise or condemning each other outright!"

"Many men and many organizations have their own ideas about 'unification'. There is no major Theosophical group that does not harbour wistful dreams of having increasing numbers of Lodges as well as individuals 'come over' to it, until all shall be resolved in harmony under one name and leadership". The writer of this may be referring to the officials at the headquarters of the Adyar, Covina and United Lodge, and he may know them intimately enough to be certain that they do harbour such 'wistful dreams'—or nightmares. The Canadian Society is but a small portion of the Theosophical Society (Adyar) and because of this, the fact that no one, so far as I am aware, on the Canadian Executive entertains any such dreams, may be beside the point. The Canadian attitude is, as we see it," 'If you sees a better 'ole, go to it,'—but don't think that by resigning for one organization and joining another theosophical organization, you are going to be any further ahead. All that any Society can offer you is a place to work. If you consider that a Covina Lodge or a United Lodge is doing more useful work than at Adyar Lodge, and if you have an inner compulsion to resign from the Adyar Lodge because of the greater scope of usefulness afforded by another Lodge, that is up to you entirely. You yourself must decide whether your motives are good, bad, or mixed. But if your reasons for resigning are to enable you to enter into a more congenial atmosphere, to be with persons whom you feel are

more harmonious, or from whom you may derive a greater advantage, then your yourself must reconcile your oath of Universal Brotherhood with your denial of it."

The Theosophical Society in Canada has endeavoured to express the original aims of the one Universal Theosophical Movement. Its members, on the whole, are not attracted to the psychism and astralism, and the ecclesiasticism which has grown up in the Theosophical Society, Adyar, and which has driven away from that Society a number of those egos who are coming into incarnation, and who, picking up the threads from former lives, are attracted by occultism, but who are not attracted by the immaturity of any of its lesser presentations. The Canadian Society, in its relationships with other organizations in the Movement, recognizes their own right of independence in approach and action. Its affiliation of mind with several of such groups is closer than it is with the general attitude of the Adyar members.

It is true as *Eirenicon* says that the cleavage between the Societies is too deep to be bridged quickly; it is also true that the basis for any union should be 'similarity of aim, purposes and teaching'. Any effort towards a possible amalgamation of the Societies into one world-wide organization may be abortive at the present time, and might defeat the very purpose which its sponsors had in mind. The Good Book says, "He that believeth doth not make haste". We are concerned in the insularity of the Societies and their members. Perhaps the movement towards mutual assistance, co-operation and true fraternity will come about from below—members who feel that the separateness should disappear will help to break down the dams by becoming members of other theosophical organizations. I am a member of three and would

gladly join all others.

The recognition of the ideal of Universal Brotherhood is the sole requirement for membership in the Movement, and with Mr. Judge we assert, "that any person who has been admitted to any Theosophical Society should be received everywhere among Theosophists, just as Masons are among Masons."

This is the sixtieth anniversary of the death of H.P.B. Shortly before her passing she had a foreboding of the despoliation of the years of the locust—the work scattered; strange doctrines introduced; bitterness, separateness, insularity instead of openhanded and openhearted fraternity among theosophical brothers.

Can the wasted years be restored? They have gone, and with them have gone all the opportunities, the wonderful 'might-have-beens' of that period. But during the coming cycle, we can rebuild. Is it too great a task to re-create for this and the coming generation, H. P. B.'s vision of the universal Theosophical Movement? If we become servants of the Movement, and give our highest loyalty to that ideal, many of the causes of differences would be resolved.

TWO KINDS OF GOOD

There are two kinds of good possible to men: one enjoyed by our animal being, the other felt and appreciated by our spirits. Every man understands more or less the difference between these two; between prosperity and well-doing; between indulgence and nobleness; between comfort and inward peace; between pleasure and striving after perfection; between happiness and blessedness. These are two kinds of Harvest; and the labour necessary for them respectively is of very different kinds. The labour which produces the harvest of the one has no tendency to secure the other.—Frederick W. Robertson.

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