

THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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VOL. XXXIII., No. 3

TORONTO, MAY 15th, 1952

Price 20 Cents.

WHITE LOTUS DAY

Whenever we find a Theosophical Society, throughout the centuries—and there has been some such movement in the last quarter of each century—we find certain requirements in connection therewith: to put together the bibles of the world and find out what was common to all of them, and to find out the extent to which one bible would explain another, to make enquiry into so-called supernatural phenomena, and, added to these another requirement, a requirement of great importance; the so-called brotherhood. The Theosophical Society of our day was established on that primary basis, that it should be made to form a nucleus for the universal brotherhood of mankind.

People are inclined to say 'this is another of the many isms', but it possesses this distinct difference; it does not endeavour to be a separate cult but endeavours to be a synthesis of all of the so-called new religions, and endeavours to tie them up to the religions of the past. In this tremendous work, it naturally faces tremendous difficulties, and the diffusion of effort arising out of the work of the Theosophical Society has resulted in a great many divergences and in spreading a great many ideas and sending out a great many students for whom it could have no credit. In

considering the society today, you have to consider the things it has achieved, and the men who have worked with it at various times. It becomes the most potent influence of our era. Those things arising out of the Society and running collateral with it, and deriving help and benefit from it, have become so widespread that you will find wherever you go a new point of view about life. All the great liberalizing movements in the various countries have grown from those who have had some link with Theosophy at some time. When you find these people all have something in common, the source of supply is either the present Theosophical movement or one of the many Theosophical societies or groups that have been formed back through the centuries; the establishing of a nucleus for the brotherhood of mankind always the center.

The trouble with mankind is that it has been living in little valleys surrounded by high hills, and the people of each valley hold to their own belief and say it is the only true faith. We find for instance one group saying that a child is newly created of God, perhaps in health, perhaps in sickness, perhaps in adversity and perhaps in wealth, and he goes on all through life, required to make certain achievements in it, always

with a terrible disparity between opportunities. Is it worthy of God that this should be the case? Is it worthy of the God who is the author of this universe that these doctrines should be true? Let us put all the beliefs of all the valleys together side by side and see what all of them have to say.

There are certain things that man knows in his own soul, certain fundamental ideas. It is fundamental that whatever teaching there may be about life, about man's origin and his destiny, must be available equally to all men. There must have been always a revelation of that sort. If it could occur once, it could occur again. Everything issues from a divine center and no center of life can ignore any other center of life. The great fundamental truth which has always been believed by the greatest among mankind and upheld at the cost of suffering, always has been, first, that there is a fundamental brotherhood between the individuals of the human race, between the human race and the animals, between the animals, the trees and the rocks, and that every atom of manifested life in the universe is indissolubly tied within some central Being. This is not a poetical fiction but a fundamental fact manifested in all the sciences. Whosoever hurts a thing outside himself, as he thinks, inevitably wounds himself. All revelation has been equally for all mankind, and this broken jagged thing we call physical life is eternal, and made up of many physical lives. We come again and again to this earth, return here to the place where causes were set up. What you see broken, unfair, unjust, is really the carrying over from a previous set of actions. Whatever is unrewarded must achieve its reward in another set of conditions on this earth. This life goes on through the human race and goes on to illimitable ranges after that; nothing less would be sufficient for the glory of

God. All justice is exactly equal and even. Whatever you do now you can expect inevitably to meet and pay for. Mankind represents a vast stretch of evolution. The pathway from the lowest savage up to the Christ occupies an immense period in time and evolution. There are those who have gone through the stages through which we have gone, and have emerged, have attained to a sufficient understanding of mankind that they can turn and teach; and that is the eternal law of the universe, that each one does it for some other. But away on beyond us and ready always to teach and work for us, are those who have, as we say, liberated themselves.

There is a more observable phenomena, where an individual suddenly transcends the mental consciousness and steps into something higher than that. It is a state of increased vision, such a vision as came to Buddha, to Jesus, to Walt Whitman, to Plato; and Dr. Bucke in his book *Cosmic Consciousness* gives numerous instances of a lesser degree of the same thing. It is a state of direct cognition; the actual union of all created things is known; an acquirement of the understanding of all the things of the earth. There is sufficient indication, I think, to every thinking person, that there is a world just beyond the world in which we live; not a world to which the dead go, but a state of consciousness, a realm of being below which we stand, and which possesses as much greater powers than the powers of mind as mind possesses over the powers of emotion; and the operation of consciousness in that realm would be to ours as ours would be to a dog. You know how a trained dog struggles just on the verge of understanding of human thought.

The great thing about that world is the sudden realization of this essential fact that all mankind is indissolubly

linked together. When you have done an evil or a harsh thing to another, you have set up a barrier between that person and yourself which closes off the life that is poured down into you. The tie that links us up is in another world and one excludes himself therefrom by blocking the channel through which he receives that current or that life which is the common life of all mankind. Having hated or excluded someone, having refused to perform the brotherly thing, you have inserted a plug which breaks the current. The ordinary run of mankind do not feel these things, but we come to a place where the doing of something which is not as it should be, blocks certain warm currents in your body. You often see the results in indigestion and headache. You have cut yourself off from a central source of supply by that act. The fact of resenting this or that, of disliking, has actually impaired your own life currents.

If you go into these enquiries without that fundamental recognition that you do this work in service to the rest of mankind, you are going to hurt yourself. You will find ideas which will render you very powerful, will give you possession of knowledge, a system for the understanding of the things of the world, which will give you immense advantages, a research which will carry you into dangerous slippery places, and if you go into one or the other of these places without this safety which is the knowledge of one's absolute responsibility to everyone about him, the knowledge that one is choked or cut off by an unbrotherly thing, you are walking to your certain disaster. When you hear an occultist talk about brotherhood, no matter how badly he may fall down on his doctrine, you may know he is not talking about a poetic thing, nor about passing around the hat for somebody, he is talking about a fundamental force which is as wonderful as it is terrible.

By no possible strain of effort can you escape the human race.

By no effort can any individual in mankind do more than by going on learning more, finding out more, achieving greater responsibility for mankind around about him, all he does is lift himself higher in the chain of teachers that runs like a great series of golden threads down through the universe.

Madam Blavatsky requested that there be a day in each year set aside to recall the Society itself to think that out of the grossness, out of the chaos of things dark, in due season grew a very precious flower, something which gave birth to a new movement. May 8th is called White Lotus Day after the East Indian lotus symbol of the flower of perfection, which grows from the waters and the grossness of life. Let us once in the year, see what this Society is about, what it has done and can do. It has been the builder of a far greater pattern than any one person in it knows anything about. It may not be making a great noise, it may not be doing the things that we look at as so important in life, but it is actually by its very pre-occupation with ideas, by the people whom it sends out, it is forming a nucleus for the universal brotherhood of mankind. It does actually set something alight on inner planes, and these contacts are the most priceless things in life. Curious initiations go on all the time among such people.

Simply to talk about these things,— the talk spreads from one to another, and it goes out, and disciples who had forgotten their teachers, and teachers who had almost forgotten their disciples remember, and old links are re-established, and we make the world anew.

(The above is from a White Lotus Day lecture by the late Roy Mitchell and was sent in by a member who had made extensive notes of his talk.)

IS THERE AN AETHER?

DIRAC vs. EINSTEIN

BY PHILLIPS NEWCOMBE

This is a glorious age, notwithstanding finance budgets and cold wars. Any student of Theosophy who undertakes to carry out the second object of the Society can find it a very exciting one too.

It is four years or more since I addressed the Toronto Lodge on some scientific matters. I believe the Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist* and others may remember, I stated, that P. A. M. Dirac could properly be regarded as at the top of the list of thinkers and researchers in atomic phenomena. There were good reasons for saying so then; and at this moment we find Dirac certainly taking that position.

Paul Adrian Maurice Dirac, fifty years of age, an Englishman of Swiss descent, graduate of Bristol University, Lucasian Professor of Mathematics, Cambridge University, St. John's College, has made an important announcement, which has caused a big rumpus in the scientific world, and we shall not hear the last of it in our time.

In an article appearing in November, 1951, issue of *Nature* magazine, Dirac postulates "a state" in the universe which he calls "an æther". Now, we have heard little of the æther during the past half century; in fact it had become pretty well abandoned by most physicists of consequence. Dirac's æther cannot be described as simply as the old-fashioned æther, for it is a mathematical discovery and requires elaborate mathematics for its description. But the meaning and implications of the concept may be made clear. And while we may be ungracious enough here to grab the results of Dirac's mathematical reasoning for our understanding, and throw the equations out the win-

dow, I do not think Dirac would mind.

Throughout the nineteenth century, science seemed to be in a continual quandary over the æther. The wave theory of light was uppermost, and scientists could not conceive a light wave without a material æther as a carrier of vibrations. The æther was supposed to carry waves across space and to pervade all matter. Many things were said about this æther and for some, æther took the place of space itself. There was nothing else. It was the ultimate and foundation of the physical universe. It was not only the vehicle for transmission of radiant energy, but it was the substratum from which all matter issued and into which matter disappeared. The memory of Sir Oliver Lodge should be honoured for his labours in this field. He made valiant attempts to define the properties of the æther, such as its velocity.

All this controversy about an æther came about as an attempt to explain the phenomena of light in mechanical terms, that is according to Newtonian principles. Scientists were figuring out ingenious and even fantastic mathematical schemes on luncheon table-cloths, in order to give this æther such properties so that its vibrations would constitute light. They found it a tough job.

It takes eight minutes for light to travel to us from the sun. How is it transmitted? In those days, the theory that light may be tiny particles shot out from the sun was held untenable. Developing the theory that light was a wave motion, they had to develop a medium for the waves to travel in. At first some scientists conceived this medium, i.e., the æther, as a kind of a gas. This idea did not work. Then

they concocted some more high mathematics, which showed that the æther was like a jelly. This preoccupation with æther came finally to an end. Why? Because we cannot explain light in mechanical terms. They could not fit the actions of light into the Newtonian scheme. And then came along Clerk-Maxwell's demonstration that light is an electromagnetic phenomenon. Electricity is not mechanical. Sir Isaac Newton had laid out the scheme of the universe in terms of matter and motion in such a thorough-going manner that his rules were accepted as sacrosanct and were supposed to cover all phenomena. When the scientists failed to fit light into Newtonian mechanics by way of an æther (which became so complicated that it became a nightmare), the scientists got their first inkling that there was a limitation to the application of Newtonian concepts. So we see that the idea of a universal and all-pervading æther as a foundation on which to build the theory of electromagnetic phenomena fell through.

The twentieth century broke with Einstein's theory of relativity and Planck's quantum theory. These concepts demonstrate that the electromagnetic particle whether a photon of light, an electron or a what-have-you, flows freely through space unhampered by an æther or anything else.

Einstein postulated as the real basis from which all natural laws are derived, a four-dimensional foundation or formulation. It is conventional space with its three aspects, plus the time factor. With Einstein, the existence of an æther was undesirable and unnecessary, and indeed it was found to be incompatible with the theory of relativity. Relativity became so well established that the æther idea was abandoned.

Now, after fifty years of quiescence, the æther theory is revived, or to be more accurate, a new æther theory is

postulated by Dirac. Dirac points out that scientific knowledge has advanced in these fifty years, especially by the developments in the quantum theory. Dirac says the situation is now changed, and he has examined the question in the light of present day knowledge, and he finds "that the æther is no longer ruled out by relativity, and good reasons can now be advanced for postulating an æther". One of Dirac's equations sets out a certain and pervasive velocity at all points in space-time which Dirac says—"plays a fundamental part in electrodynamics. It is natural to regard it as the velocity of some real physical thing. Thus with the new theory of electrodynamics we are rather forced to have an æther".

Now we should not be hasty and say that science in this matter of the æther is right back where it started in the nineteenth century. That is not so. In a limited and relative sense it is back, but upon a much higher plane, for great advances have been made and science has travelled in a spiral upward.

We are waiting for Einstein's reply. It should be remembered that Einstein developed his theories, dealing in the main with macrocosm; Dirac and others have been more concerned with the microcosm. Einstein wrestled with the problems of the outside gravitational field. Dirac has been puzzling over the antics of the electron inside of the atom as well as outside. Einstein has tried for years to produce one formula which would satisfactorily account for all these phenomena. Nearly two years ago he produced an equation calculated to do this. But no one knows yet. Has Dirac now succeeded in this aim?

We now see the stage all set, and are witnessing a grand "attempt to conceive the world as a whole by means of thought". This is what Bertrand Russell calls "metaphysics". But I am bold enough to be more explicit. Science,

having arrived at the infinite divisibility of the atom as postulated by Madame Blavatsky, is now strenuously engaged in battling with the "subtle states" of matter which Madame Blavatsky warned them of generations ago. Let me give just one quotation from *The Secret Doctrine*.

"Occultism opens limitless horizons to Substance . . . of states still undreamed of by the physicists". Well, our modern physicists have now reached these states with a vengeance! Later, we shall try to define the precise issue between Einstein and Dirac, and give some theological implications.

(To Be Continued)

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

EMORY P. WOOD

The Editor of *The Canadian Theosophist* and Dr. W. E. Wilks, Vancouver, have taken a strong stand in upholding the straight unadulterated Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters, versus the Neo-theosophy of Mrs. Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. This is quite in order for a vast difference does exist in the teachings given out by both schools of thought, as I will attempt to show from their own statements. As great principles are involved, and because as Theosophists we are truth-seekers, I see no reason why we should not attempt, at any rate, to unmask error and uphold the right, regardless of the personalities concerned. We are not approaching this in any spirit of antagonism, nor with any feeling of animosity, but with a sincere desire to discover truth, to see with a clear vision and with a correct perspective the play and counterplay of great forces and principles working out into manifestation, the individuals involved being but expressions or agents of a particular type of force or principle.

It is common knowledge that the Theosophical Society was founded in November, 1875, at New York, to bring the philosophy and the wisdom of the East to the materialistic West, and to render the phenomena of Spiritualism on an intelligent, rational and scientific basis. H. P. Blavatsky was chosen by the Masters of Wisdom for the leader-

ship in this work. They tell us in their letters that "after nearly a century of fruitless search, our chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European body upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own." "With him (Col. Olcott) we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them she had strong and personal defects, but just as she was, there was no second to her living fit for this work." The first remark was written in 1881 and the latter in 1882, one by the Master K.H. and the other by the Master M.

Let it not be overlooked or forgotten that when the Society was formed in 1875, both Mrs. Besant and C. W. Leadbeater were twenty-eight years of age, and that, if they had the necessary qualities also, why did not the Masters wait even a few years for their greater maturity?

However, be that as it may, let us consider the type of teaching given out by H. P. Blavatsky first, and deal with the development of ideas in their chronological order. In 1877 the first book published under Theosophical auspices, *Isis Unveiled* by H.P.B. immediately aroused a great deal of interest. It was in two volumes, the first discussing Science and the second Theology, each containing over 600 pages. In Volume

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NOTES BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Some time ago I received a request from Rukmini Devi to send seedlings of maple trees to India. She informed me that she had bought some land for the building of the Besant Cultural Centre, and as the land is bare she was doing her best to cultivate it. She suggested that representatives of each country plant a tree to link up this work with the Society and with other countries. Most of them have done so and in spite of difficulties in obtaining permission to send such owing to certificates being required to specify that the consignment is free of pests, etc., I have at last, through the courtesy of Mr. C. M. Hale a member of the General Executive, been able to notify her that seeds are at long last on the way.

* * * *

The General Secretary for Switzerland, Mr. Albert Sassi, in a most friendly letter informs me that Madame Rachel Tripet has been elected as his successor. He hopes that the excellent relationship already established between our sections will continue and takes the opportunity to send the members of the Canadian Society on behalf of the Swiss Theosophical Society their warmest greetings and deep appreciation of the contribution of the Canadian Section to the great work.

* * * *

I am happy to welcome the following new members into the Society:—Mr. Samuel Sniderman; Mrs. Edna Blais; Mrs. Isolde Bleks of the Hamilton Lodge. Mrs. Elizabeth Pickard; Mrs. Faith Garson; Mrs. Gladys Hanley of the Toronto Lodge. Miss Bertha Loeff; Miss Ethel Fraser; Mrs. Elma Larsen; Mrs. Alice Teichtner of the Montreal Lodge and Mrs. Helen Smook of the Vancouver Lodge.

Will members who are in arrears for the year about to end please note that the magazine has been sent to them regularly in the hope that they would put themselves in good-standing. The financial year ends on June 30 and unless these send in remittances before that time their names will be taken off the mailing list.

E. L. T.

THE DELUSION OF APPEARANCES

Subhuti, someone might fill innumerable worlds with the seven treasures and give all away in gifts of alms, but if any good man or any good woman awakens the thought of Enlightenment and takes even four lines from this Discourse, reciting, using, receiving, retaining and spreading them abroad and explaining them for the benefit of others, it will be far more meritorious.

Now in what manner may he explain them to others? By detachment from appearances—abiding in Real Truth. So I tell you—

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:

A star at dawn, a bubble in a stream;
A flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
A flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.

When Buddha finished this Discourse, the venerable Subhuti, together with the bhikshus, bhikshunis, lay-brothers and sisters, and the whole realms of Gods, Men and Titans, were filled with joy by His teaching, and, taking it sincerely to heart they went their ways.

—*The Jewel of Transcendental Wisdom*
(*The Diamond Sutra*)

Translated from the Chinese by A. F. Price.

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:

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Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

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

THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE

The Quarterly Meeting of the General Executive took place on Sunday, April 6, at 52 Isabella Street, Toronto, with the following members in attendance:—Miss M. Hindsley; Messrs. Dudley W. Barr; C. M. Hale; G. I. Kinman and the General Secretary and transacted routine business. Statements regarding funds and membership were submitted. New members were more numerous than for some years past, some twenty-five being enrolled up to date. There were still thirty-two members unpaid from last year's roll. Subscrip-

tions to the magazine were well maintained, fifteen new ones being registered. Among the items of interest discussed was the question of sponsoring Professor Ernest Wood and Dr. A. V. Kuhn as Section Lecturers among the lodges which was brought forward from the last meeting. The pros and cons of the itineraries could not be definitely established until elucidated by further correspondence with the persons concerned and this the General Secretary was requested to do. It is hoped that something definite will be arranged by the next meeting when due notice will be given in the magazine. A controversy between the French Section and Adyar concerning certain monies that had been bequeathed to the Strasbourg Lodge by a deceased member was brought to the notice of Colonel Thomson by an executive of the French Section requesting him to act as a sort of intermediary, was again placed before the meeting amplified by a voluminous correspondence in the French language. After a long discussion the consensus was that owing to the way the case had been presented, the lack of essential information, the vagueness of various assertions and other things that there was very little we could do in the matter. Whilst having our sympathy it was felt that the legal avenues had not been fully explored. The General Secretary was advised to write to this effect. The date for the closing of nominations for the coming year having expired on April 1 the results were laid before the meeting. There being no change in the general set-up the Meeting declared that the status quo would obtain and that no election would be necessary. The next meeting was arranged for Sunday, July 6th.

E. L. T.

A NEW IMPULSE

An interesting article "A New Impulse of Theosophy" by Rohit Mehta, General Secretary of the Indian Section, appeared in *The Indian Theosophist* for February, 1952. The author says, "... a re-statement of the Ancient Truth becomes necessary in every age because of the different conditions of physical and psychological living. . . Without such re-statements, Theosophy, or Truth, is likely to become crystallized into a system of thought or a creed or a dogma. But such re-statement cannot be a mere intellectual manipulation to satisfy the new conditions of life; it must emanate from new levels of psychological and spiritual experience Today it appears that a new facet of Theosophy is being revealed to us and The Theosophical Society will have to be sufficiently flexible to invite the attention of its members to this new facet of the Diamond."

"During the last 75 years there have been fundamentally two impulses in the Theosophical Society and it is these that have given vitality to the Theosophical Movement. The first impulse was given by H. P. Blavatsky and this may be described in the following terms: THEOSOPHY AS THE ESSENCE OF WISDOM RELIGION."

"The second impulse was given by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater. It can be described in the following terms: THEOSOPHY AS THE SCIENCE OF THE INVISIBLE."

Mr. Mehta is of the opinion that "while the second impulse was different from the first, it cannot be said to be in conflict with it . . . It is true that many of those who were well established in the truths revealed by the first impulse refused to move when the second impulse was given. They regarded the second impulse as spurious and entirely

foreign to the truths of Theosophy."

The 'new impulse' which Mr. Mehta foresees has to do with transcendence and can be described as "THEOSOPHY AS THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSCENDENCE, OR THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNMANIFEST."

"The Divinehood of Man about which Jinarajadasa has spoken and the Living in the Presence of Truth or Transcendence which seems to be the fascinating approach of J. Krishnamurti, is indeed the New Impulse of Theosophy. . ."

This is encouraging—perhaps so because our eyes have become dimmed and our hearts weary looking for some indication in official quarters that the 'second impulse' was not the be-all and end-all of all Theosophy. The central core of all teachings presented by H. P. Blavatsky was the Divinity of Man and no writer in modern times has written more fully, vigorously and logically on that point. If Mr. Mehta's article is an indication that there is to be a return to this fundamental concept, then let it be welcomed. Once the concept of the innate divinity of every human soul becomes the point of emphasis in the presentation of Theosophy, then there must inevitably be a return to the basic teaching of H.P.B. and the influence of the so-called 'second impulse' will gradually diminish.

Let us hope that we are at the beginning of a new cycle in the life of the Movement, whether or not this is due to a 'third impulse'. The idea of the innate divinity of man and the implications arising out of this constitute the primary basis of the Theosophical approach. If the Adyar Society begins to present this there may be a breaking down of barriers between that Society and other Theosophical organizations. It was the 'second impulse' which drove them apart.

D. W. B.

WHAT IS THEOSOPHY?

(Continued from Page 38)

II, on Theology, we find that Chapter 11, dealing with the comparative results of Buddhism and Christianity, contains the following summary on page 544:

"The present volumes have been written to small purpose if they have not shown:

1. That Jesus, the Christ-God, is a myth concocted two centuries after the real Hebrew Jesus died.
2. That, therefore, he never had any authority to give Peter, or any one else, plenary power.
3. That even if he had given such authority, the word Petra (rock) referred to the revealed truths of the Petroma, not to him who thrice denied him; and that besides, the apostolic succession is a gross and palpable fraud.
4. That the *Gospel according to Matthew* is a fabrication based upon a wholly different manuscript."

To the Christian, these are fighting words, but the arguments leading up to these conclusions, are to be found in the volume referred to. They are too long to quote.

Early in 1879, H.P.B. sailed from London for India, leaving the Society in America in charge of Wm. Q. Judge. Headquarters were established in Bombay, and in the month of October, the first Theosophical magazine *The Theosophist* began publication. It contained a leading editorial, "What is Theosophy?" In this article, she says:

"Theosophy is the archaic Wisdom-Religion, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization. Practical theurgy or 'ceremonial magic' so often resorted to in their exorcisms by the Roman Catholic Clergy was discarded by the Theosophists. It is but Jamblichus alone who, transcending the other Eclectics, added to Theosophy the doctrine

of Theurgy. When ignorant of the true meaning of the esoteric divine symbols of nature, man is apt to miscalculate the powers of his soul, and, instead of communing spiritually and mentally with the higher, celestial beings, the good spirits (the gods of the theurgists of the Platonic School), he will unconsciously call forth the evil, dark powers, which lurk around humanity—the undying, grim creations of human crimes and vices—and thus fall from theurgia (white magic) into goetia (or black magic, sorcery). *Purity of deed and thought can alone raise us to an intercourse 'with the gods' and attain for us the goal we desire.*"

On March 31, 1885, H.P.B. sailed for Europe, and never returned to India. C. W. Leadbeater had joined the Lodge in London in 1883, went to India in 1884, and for a few months only, was in association with H.P.B. However, H. P. B. somewhat recovered her health, and in September, 1887, began the publication of *Lucifer* at London, and was also busy writing *The Secret Doctrine*.

In the February, 1888, issue, in an article "What is Truth?" she says:

"In every age there have been Sages who have mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in our race, has, or could have given out, the whole or final truth to any man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in himself*. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no human light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more . . . *Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which man is at one with the UNIVERSAL MIND, he can get naught on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion.*"

Two months later, in an article "Practical Occultism" she says:

"It is *comparatively* easy to learn the trick of spells and the methods of using the subtler, but, still material, forces of physical nature; the powers of the animal soul in man are soon awakened; the forces which his love, his hate, his passion, can call into operation are readily developed. But this is Black Magic—*Sorcery*. For it is the motive, and the motive alone, which makes any exercise of power become black, malignant, or white, beneficent magic. It is impossible to employ *spiritual* forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator."

In 1888 *The Secret Doctrine* was published, a few months later Mrs. Annie Besant reviewed it for the editor of the *London Review of Reviews*, and as a result, became acquainted with H. P. Blavatsky and joined the Society. In less than two years, H.P.B. passed away.

For some years there was no great effort to remodel the principles laid down by H.P.B. It is true there were differences of opinion, and there were moments of intense excitement, as various individuals jockeyed for positions of power. A new education was gradually taking shape, the printing press was very active in bringing out simpler interpretations of various aspects of the recondite writings of H.P.B. But gradually the universal appeal and viewpoint was lost, and the teaching narrowed down to an exposition of Roman Catholic sacramentalism.

Before me I have a book by C. W. Leadbeater. It is the second edition, published 1919, of *The Hidden Side of Things*.

From it I will quote.

"The scheme adopted for passing on the power (of the Nirmanakayas) is what is called ordination, and thus we see at once the real meaning of the doctrine of the apostolic succession, about which there has been so much argu-

ment. I myself held strongly to that doctrine while officiating as a priest of the Church; but when through the study of Theosophy I came to understand religion better and to take a far wider view of life, I began to doubt whether in reality the succession meant so much as we of the ritualistic party had supposed. With still further study, however, I was rejoiced to find that there was a real foundation for the doctrine, and that it meant even much more than our highest schools had ever taught."

"THE MASS"

"The quite ordinary celebration of the Mass was a magnificent display of the application of occult force. At the moment of consecration the Host glowed with the most dazzling brightness; it became in fact a veritable sun to the eye of the clairvoyant, and as the priest lifted it above the heads of the people, I noticed that two distinct varieties of spiritual force poured forth from it, which might perhaps be taken as roughly corresponding to the light of the sun and the streamers of his corona. (the first) poured forth impartially upon all, the just and the unjust, the believers and the scoffers.

"But this second force was called into activity only in response to a strong feeling of devotion on the part of the individual. The elevation of the Host immediately after its consecration was not the only occasion upon which this display of force took place. When the Benediction was given with the Blessed Sacrament exactly the same thing happened. Everything connected with the Host—the tabernacle, the monstrance, the altar, the priest's vestments, the insulating humeral veil, the chalice and paten—all were strongly charged with this tremendous magnetism, and all were radiating it forth, each in its degree."

"Having watched all this, I then proceeded to make further investigations as to how far this outflowing of force

was affected by the character, knowledge or the intention of the priest. First, only those priests who have been lawfully ordained, and have the apostolic succession, can produce this effect at all. Other men, not being part of this definite organization, cannot perform this feat, no matter how devoted or good or saintly they may be. Secondly, neither the character of the priest, nor his knowledge, nor ignorance as to what he is really doing, affects the result in any way whatever."

Here we have a teaching calling itself Theosophical, published by the Theosophical Society, acquiesced in by the General Council of the Theosophical Society, which is diametrically opposed to the teaching given out by the founder of the Society. Well may we ask, "What is Theosophy?" You and I who are members in this later generation, have

the responsibility of making our own choice, and giving the weight of our influence to the side of our choice. Both cannot be right, neither can both be theosophical. One or the other must emerge supreme.

Perhaps the Master K.H. gave us a clue in Letter XVI, when answering the questions of A. P. Sinnett re skandhas. He said:

"We add to them *two more*, the nature and the names of which you may learn hereafter. Suffice for the present to let you know that they are connected with, and productive of *Sakkayaditthi*, the 'heresy or delusion of individuality' and of *Attavada* 'the doctrine of Self,' both of which (in the case of the fifth principle the soul) lead to the *maya* of heresy and belief in the efficacy of vain rites and ceremonies; in prayers and intercession."

THE MOMENT OF DEATH

"Thou shalt understand that it is a science most profitable, and passing all other sciences, for to learn to die . . . thou shalt find full few that have this cunning to learn to die."

—*Orologium Sapientiae*

Much of theosophical instruction is preoccupied with right living, and while there is a wealth of information about life after death, *the moment of death* has not been emphasized. This is the moment when we withdraw our consciousness permanently from the physical body.

In sleep—the "little death"—when consciousness leaves, the physical and the etheric bodies remain together, while at death, the etheric double is drawn away from its physical counterpart by the departing consciousness. The magnetic tie existing between them during the incarnation is broken.

It is concerning this extremely im-

portant *moment of death* that the Master K.H. (*Mahatma Letters*, Letter XXc) said:

"Remember we *create* our devachan as our avitchi while yet on earth, and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our intellectual, sentient lives. That feeling which is the strongest in us at that supreme hour; when, as in a dream the events of a long life, to their minutest details, are marshalled in the greatest order in a few seconds in our vision—that feeling will become the fashioner of our bliss or woe, the *life principle* of our future existence.

In Letter XXIIIb:

"It is for this very reason, viz., that our last desire may not be unfavourable to our future progress, that we have to watch our actions and control our passions and desires throughout our whole earthly career . . . The experience of dying men—by drowning and other ac-

cidents—brought back to life, has corroborated our doctrine in almost every case. Such thoughts are *involuntary* and we have no more control over them than we would over the eye's retina to prevent it perceiving that colour which affects it most. At the last moment, the whole life is reflected in our memory and emerges from all the forgotten nooks and corners picture after picture, one event after the other. The dying brain dislodges memory with a strong supreme impulse, and memory restores faithfully every impression entrusted to it during the period of the brain's activity. That impression and thought which was the strongest naturally becomes the most vivid and survives so to say all the rest which now vanish and disappear forever, to reappear but in devachan. No man dies insane or unconscious, as some physiologists assert. Even a madman, or one in a fit of delirium tremens will have his instant of perfect lucidity at the moment of death though unable to say so to those present. The man may often appear dead. Yet from the last pulsation, from and between the last throbbing of his heart and the moment when the last spark of animal heat leaves the body—the *brain thinks* and the *Ego* lives over in those few brief seconds his whole life over again. Speak in whispers, ye who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have you to keep quiet after Death has laid her clammy hand upon the body. Speak in whispers, I say, lest you disturb the quiet ripple of thought, and hinder the busy work of the Past casting on its reflection upon the Veil of the Future."

From these words of the Master, it is clear that the *moment of death* is very important, and we should know how to meet it.

That there has been a world-wide distribution of literature on the science of

dying is well established. It has been guarded for centuries by the Initiates in all lands, notably Egypt. Among these works are the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *De Arte Moriendi* (The Book of the Craft of Dying, ed. by F. M. M. Comper, London, 1917); the Orphic manual, *The Descent into Hades*; *The Pretakhanda* of the Hindu *Garuda Purana*; Swedenborg's *De Coelo et de Inferno*; Rusca's *De Inferno*, and several other works, ancient and modern. They teach in some detail, particularly the first two above mentioned, that there are right ways and wrong ways to leave the physical body at death, and that we should learn the right way so we may die intelligently, triumphantly, and above all, *keenly conscious*, as have the saints and sages of all time.

Various of the early churches of Christendom—Roman, Greek, Anglican, Syrian, Armenian, Coptic and others dating from the Reformation appropriated into their rituals and observances some of this pre-Christian instruction about the art of dying.

For the Theosophical student, brief, understandable and, more important, instructions *applicable* in our way of life in the Western world are available to us in the English translations of the *Upanishads* and in *The Bhagavad-Gita*.

UPANISHADS

Mantras for recitation at the hour of death form the concluding part of the Ishopanishad, contained in *The Upanishads*, translated by G. R. S. Mead and Roy Choudhuri.

"Breath to the deathless breath,
To ashes may this body go!
OM! Mind, thy deeds recall,
Recall, O mind, recall thy deeds, recall.

O fire divine, lead us by a fair path
To our reward (the result of our life-work).

O, god who knowest all our deeds,
Strip from us crooked evil!
To thee all hail oft and again we cry!"

And in the Prashnopanishad:

"Whate'er his thought, with that he
goes
Unto the upper life; the upper life
joined
With the fire, united with the Self,
Leads him unto his world as he has
built it up."

It is the mind that carries over the remembrance of past births, and by fixing the mind on this fact at the moment of death, the possibility of recollection in the next birth is strengthened. So say the Upanishads.

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Those familiar with theosophical teachings know there are seven principal chakras, force centers or "gates" in the physical body. The lowest one, *Muladhara*, is at the lowest end of the spinal cord; the others are *Svadhithana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddha*, *Ajna*, and the seventh, in the brain, is the *Sahasrara*, or the thousand-petalled lotus. It is through this seventh gate that consciousness normally goes out from the body at death.

The Bhagavad-Gita has something specific to say about the moment of death in the Eighth Discourse, the Yoga of the Indestructible Supreme Eternal:

"And he who, casting off the body, goeth forth thinking upon Me only at the time of the end, he entereth into My being: there is no doubt of that.

Whosoever at the end abandoneth the body, thinking upon any being, to that being only he goeth, O Kaunteya, ever to that conformed in nature.

Therefore, at all times think upon Me only, and fight. With mind and reason (Buddhi) set on Me, without doubt thou shalt come to Me.

With the mind not wandering after aught else, harmonized by continual practice, constantly meditating, O Partha, one goeth to the Spirit supreme, divine.

He who thinketh upon the Ancient, the Omniscient, the All-Ruler, minuter than the minute, the supporter of all, of form unimaginable, refulgent as the sun beyond the darkness,

In the time of forthgoing, with unshaken mind, fixed in devotion, by the power of yoga drawing together his life-breath in the center of the two eyebrows (*Ajna*) he goeth to this Spirit, supreme, divine.

That which is declared indestructible by the Veda-knowers, that which the controlled and passion-free enter, that desiring which Brahmacharya (the vow of continence) is performed, that path I declare to thee with brevity.

All the gates (of the body) closed, the mind confined in the heart, the life-breath fixed in his own head, concentrated by yoga.

"AUM!" the one-syllabled ETERNAL, reciting, thinking upon Me, he who goeth forth, abandoning the body, he goeth on the highest path.

He who constantly thinketh upon Me, not thinking ever of another, of him I am easily reached, O Partha, of this ever-harmonized Yogi."

How many of us who have studied the *Gita* for years have taken this particular part of it seriously? How many of us have realized that we can learn as we go to sleep to withdraw our consciousness to our head and thus practice going out of the body from the seventh gate? To permit oneself to drift off into sleep without trying to preserve consciousness intact is to miss an opportunity. "To have heard and thought about the

Doctrine and not practised it, and acquired spiritual powers to assist thee at the moment of death is useless," said Milarepa, Tibet's great yogi.

"Against his will he dieth that hath not learned to die. Learn to die and thou shalt learn to live, for there shall none learn to live that hath not learned to die."

—*The Book of the Craft of Dying*
(Comper's Edition).

NOTES FROM A

NEOPHYTE'S SCRAP BOOK

Many persons today are bewildered by the conduct of human affairs and are terrified at the speed with which we seem to be moving toward a yawning precipice. Where does the student of Theosophy stand amidst the swirling tides of human emotions? Is he shaken like a leaf in the raging storm, or is he planted firmly on the solid ground of spiritual discernment, incapable of being dislodged by the doubt and despair that beat on him from all sides? Is this his position, his happy lot—to know *where* to stand, *how* to stand?

What are these days but the result of the seed of ideas planted in the minds of men, which blossomed into visions of a better social order, and the desire to be freed from the bondage of superstitions imposed by the priestcraft of all nations, and which now fill the whole earth?

The Theosophical Society should rejoice because of the part the Founders of the Society had in planting the seed. It would be folly to deplore the harvest for it must be reaped, yea, and the fields gleaned, even though it may not all be to our liking.

We are living in glorious times, on the threshold of the lifting of the dark age, when occultism will reveal its full stature and travel unto the ends of the earth. Let us march on, acquitting our-

selves like soldiers in the battle that lies ahead. It may fall to our lot to be pioneers, leading the way, casting up a highway for the peoples of the earth who will learn anew the truths of old and enter the Path.

Students should study Theosophy as never before, above all avoiding the error of regarding the mastering of *The Secret Doctrine* and kindred works as an end in itself. More important is it to regard them as a key to unlock the door of our understanding so we may use them as a gauge to judge, measure and meet the vital issues confronting us. We can unlock the door only by inserting the key ourselves. We cannot find the keyhole by using other student's eyes.

A veritable storehouse of treasure is ours for the seeking. Once found, its effulgent light will open the student's inner understanding and he should have no great difficulty in shaping his course of action to meet the challenge of the times.

H. G. Ladd.

REVIEW

The Meaning of Life—A Primer of Theosophy, by Emogene S. Simons. Published by The Theosophical Publishing House, 68 Great Russell St., London, Eng., Paper, Price 1/6.

As would be expected from the pen of Mrs. Simons, who is a competent teacher and writer, this 46-page booklet is clear and readable. In simple language the seven brief chapters carry the enquirer from the Source of Life, called God, through an explanation of how individual lives are rooted in the All, how man functions through the physical, emotional and mental bodies, how he dies and is reborn under the law of karma. The general plan and purpose of life is stated with no mention of the Eastern origin of the teachings or of the Founders. References are to familiar Christian Bible texts.

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