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WHAT IS MAN?

BY A. C. FELLOWS

The subject of this article is in the form of a question—What is Man? It may be stated at the outset that no answer is as yet forthcoming so far as the majority of mankind is concerned.

If I remember rightly, it was Solon who was reputed to be the wisest man of his day, when enquiring of the Oracle at Delphi, what it considered the most important thing he could do, received the reply, "KNOW THYSELF." So apparently Solon, despite the wisdom he possessed, had as yet been unable to solve this greatest of all problems. It is the greatest because when solved, all other problems disappear.

This same problem confronts each one of us and how few realize this, or make any attempt to approach it, by commencing the search for the solution. The whole aim and teaching of the ancient wisdom is the pointing out of this very problem and the absolute necessity of ultimately finding the answer.

When we ask ourselves the question, what do we know about ourselves, we can only reply, "little or nothing."

The solution to this question "What is man?" lies deep down in each one of us, securely locked up, until we have discovered the key.

All the great religions of the world refer to this matter in their scriptures. That of the Hindu states, "The Self abides in the heart of every man." The Buddhist says, "Look inward, thou art Buddha," and the Christian Scriptures declare that "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." In *The Secret Doctrine*, we find such statements as these: "Man tends to become a God and then—GOD, like every other atom in the Universe." (Vol. I, p. 159, Original 1888 edition). "*Man is the alpha and the omega of objective creation.*" (Vol. II, p. 170, Original). In another place (Vol. II, p. 242) man is spoken of as the crown of evolution. ". . . to become a Self-Conscious Spirit, the latter must pass through every cycle of being, culminating in its highest point on earth in Man." (Vol. I, p. 192) ". . . to become the highest Dhyana Chohan it is necessary for each Ego to attain to full self-consciousness as a human, i.e., conscious Being, which is synthesized for us in Man." (S.D. Vol. I, p. 193).

Knowing and reading these statements, can we afford to remain indifferent to the question, what is Man?

The greatest teachers who have come into the world from time to time to lead

man onward have been unable to solve this question for us. If it had been possible, they surely would have done so, but the great discovery of what he is has to be made by man himself. No other means exist. Each one of us, therefore, has to make this discovery. No one else can do this for us.

We will now proceed to make a study of man from that which may be gathered from *The Secret Doctrine* but the question can be dealt with only very briefly. It is as well to preface this study with a warning given by H.P.B. She says: "Let us study Man, therefore, but if we separate him for one moment from the Universal Whole, or view him in isolation, from a single aspect, apart from the "Heavenly Man" the Universe symbolized by Adam Kadmon or his equivalents in every Philosophy—we shall either land in Black Magic or fail most ingloriously in our attempt."

Now, for us, the body of the heavenly man is our solar system. It is our universe for the time being, since we have to carry out our evolution within it. There is nothing that exists in the solar system that is not contained in man himself, since he is the solar system in miniature. Thus man cannot be viewed in isolation or in any one single aspect, as he comprises the whole.

Quoting from *The Secret Doctrine*, the first item of importance is: ". . . there exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme. . . or rather three separate schemes of evolution, which in our system are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical evolutions. . . Each of these three systems has its own laws, and is ruled and guided by different sets of the highest Dhyanis or 'Logoi'. Each is represented in the constitution of man, the Microcosm of the great Macrocosm; and it is the union of these three streams in him which makes him the

complex being he now is. (Vol. I, pp. 180-81, Original).

Very briefly we will deal with each of these three Hierarchies, commencing with the one that concerns the lower planes, the astral and physical creations. This hierarchy in the East is known as the Lunar Pitris. They are responsible for the building of all forms on the lower planes, and the evolving of these from lower to higher ones. They are sometimes referred to as the Builders or lesser Creators. They have a consciousness of their own and intelligence up to a certain point, such as may be found in the lower kingdoms of nature. They are under the control of a higher order of Creators who may be best described as the architects—those who possess the knowledge of the plan of evolution—and the Lunar Pitris are the workmen, so to speak, who carry out their instructions. These Lunar Pitris, who in the western world are sometimes called nature spirits, work on the astral and physical planes, producing besides the forms, the desires and emotions. They were a dominant factor in forcing on evolution in the first three and one-half rounds, working through the material elements at the expense of the spiritual. Since they are called Lunar, they are further connected with the lower concrete, reasoning mind, called by us kama-manas, since the lower mind is under the dominion of the moon. Their consciousness, therefore, cannot be said to extend upward beyond the lower mental plane. These Lunar Pitris or Fathers as they are sometimes called, were divided into several classes. The higher created the men of the First and Second Races in this Fourth Round and are the Fathers in the sense that they set the type of form and personality that the human races had to follow, but we ourselves are connected with a later class who commenced its work in the early part of the Fourth Race, representing the humanity of today. It was

the Lunar Pitris who produced the astral, now the inner man as H.P.B. states; this astral being covered later by nature with a coat of skin, is the physical man of today. In this sense, therefore, this hierarchy is said to be our progenitors, producing the form, desires and emotional nature and creating man as a personality. This part of the constitution of the man is mortal, disintegrating after the death of the physical body, new vehicles having to be built at each fresh incarnation. This destruction and rebuilding is a very real necessity since it gives the required opportunity for the building of better and higher forms to keep pace with the other elements in man—his intellectual and spiritual growth. While the vehicles of the personality disintegrate at death, some remnants of the personality remain. The essence of any high ideals and thoughts during life are drawn up into the higher human self and so form part of it. The lower tendencies, or that which we may call the personal characteristics, also remain after death, and form the basis of the next personality, since we commence the new incarnation at the point where the last one left off. Our present personality is, in fact, the sum total of all our previous ones, for, as stated in *The Mahatma Letters* (Letter xvi, p. 111), "The 'old being' is the sole parent—father and mother at once—of the 'new being'. It is the former who is the creator and fashioner, of the latter, in reality; and far more so in plain truth, than any father in flesh".

This Lunar or physical hierarchy corresponds to the Third Person of the Christian Trinity, or that active Intelligence in Nature which produces all forms. Its work, therefore, is confined to the lower or material planes, being unable to function on the higher ones. The highest it can attain to, is the providing of the vehicle through which the next hierarchy can work, known to us by the term, kama-manas, or lower con-

crete mind, thus providing the necessary sequence which links the work of this and the next Hierarchy together.

We will now consider the next Hierarchy, known in the East under such names as the Agnisvattas-Manas Putras, or the Sons of Mahat, and frequently referred to in *The Secret Doctrine* as the Solar Angels, which term we will use. Their major work is to act as a link between the other two Hierarchies, the Monadic, and Lunar or physical. I will now give two or three extracts from *The Secret Doctrine* which describes the work of the Solar Angels:

"The Endowers of man with his conscious, immortal EGO, are the "Solar Angels"—whether so regarded metaphorically or literally. The mysteries of the Conscious EGO or human Soul are great. (Vol. II, p. 88, Original Edition, 1888).

"Each class of Creators endows man with what it has to give: the one builds his external form; the other gives him its essence, which later on becomes the Human *Higher Self* owing to the *personal exertion of the individual*." (Vol. II, p. 95, Orig.)

"*The Sons of MAHAT are the quickeners of the human Plant. They are the Waters falling upon the arid soil of latent life, and the Spark that vivifies the human animal. They are the Lords of Spiritual Life eternal. . . In the beginning (in the Second Race) some (of the Lords) only breathed of their essence into Manushya (men) and some took in man their abode. This shows that not all men become incarnations of the 'divine Rebels,' but only a few among them. The remainder had their fifth principle simply quickened by the spark thrown into it, which accounts for the great difference between the intellectual capacities of men and races. Had not the 'sons of Mahat,' speaking allegorically, skipped the intermediate worlds, in their impulse toward intellectual freedom, the animal man would never*

have been able to reach upward from this earth, and attain through self-exertion his ultimate goal." (Vol. II, p. 103)

These extracts well describe the work of the Solar Angels. The physical or lunar man, though endowed with the five senses of hearing, sight, feeling, taste and smell, would have had to remain sense-less without the aid of Mind, for it is only through and by means of the Mind, that man can become aware, relate and reason about that which he contacts through the senses. For this reason, the Buddhist calls the mind the sixth sense. The physical man, therefore, without the aid of mind would have been no more aware of physical existence than are the animals today, and he would certainly have been quite unable to acquire any awareness of the Monadic Hierarchy and far less be able to make any contact with it. Thus the Solar Angels by endowing man with mind provide the sequence whereby man can eventually contact the Monadic or Spiritual Hierarchy. Not only by endowing man with mind do they make him a thinking being, they further endow him with Self-Consciousness, and this by the thinking process can be steadily expanded in ever-increasing degree. Another attribute of the Solar Angels is the Will. This is also their gift to man, "...man whose intelligence makes him the only free agent in Nature," (*Mahatma Letters*, p. 57), being possessed of free will. Man, therefore, has the right of choice. This right inevitably brings with it great responsibility, for the choice of alternatives can lead him upward or downward. Such choice not only affects himself but also all those with whom he may come in contact, for the choice of any action must, of necessity, affect others as well as himself. It is by this gift of free will that man becomes the Creator of his own destiny. He is no creature of Fate, but he, and he alone decides his own future. The Solar Angels, we are told, instead of remaining mere blind func-

tioning mediums, impelled and guided by fathomless Law, claimed and enforced their right of independent judgment and will, their right of free agency and responsibility. Having won these rights for themselves, they endowed man with the same right, thus becoming the Saviours of mankind, who without these gifts could not have risen above the stage of animal man. While the Lunar or Physical Hierarchy endow man with the lower or personal self or ego, the Solar Angels endow man with the individual Self, which becomes the Higher human Self or Ego. I think it is clear from what has been quoted that Mind, the gift of the Solar Angels, is the means or link whereby the lower personal man can eventually (having become the individual or higher man) contact the Monadic Hierarchy and so make it possible for him to become a divine or spiritual man. It is for this reason that the Solar Angels are often described as the Saviours of mankind, for it is only through the agency and work of this Hierarchy that the personal or animal man has any opportunity of reaching up to and attaining divinity. There is, however, nothing vicarious about this method of evolution for *The Secret Doctrine* stresses the absolute necessity of personal striving and struggle on the part of each and every personality. Man, it is stated, is mortal, and has to win his immortality. No one else can do this for him. It must be borne in mind that this Hierarchy cannot function directly on the lower planes so far as Manas or mind is concerned. It can only send down a ray from the mental plane to the physical man, using kamanas, which is seated in the brain as its vehicle, and which was provided by the physical hierarchy for this purpose. Manas cannot descend in toto to the physical plane. The Solar Angels in their special work are limited to their own sphere of action, i.e., the mental or manasic plane.

(To Be Continued)

GENIUS AND TALENT

There is perhaps no word in this or any other language that has been so variously defined as genius. The Greeks gave the name of genius to the spiritual guide which accompanies man from the cradle to the grave, which is a very good definition if one thinks of that guide as the Higher Self of man. It seems that genius is the outcome of contact with the divine creative power, thus gaining the capacity to manifest that power on earth in new forms of beauty that have not so far appeared. Plato's definition—the finest ever made—is the power to create beauty, to *create* it, be it noted, not merely to express it or to follow it along already beaten tracks.

The other definition, rather unsatisfactory, 'the capacity for taking pains', has some foundation in truth, for a genius, no matter how great, has first to adapt himself to earth conditions, to discover exactly what medium of manifestation is best fitted to convey his message to the world, after which he must master that medium and bring it into subjection to his needs. An example of this is Keats' "Ode to the Nightingale" in the British Museum, for it is a bewildering medley of words, of which many are scored out, put back again, others substituted, in their turn crossed out, until at last the right ones are found and allowed to remain. Thus is the spirit crucified in matter, according to the law.

The ancient Israelites sometimes added to the diagram of the Tree of Life an eleventh sphere called daath, or knowledge, lying at the foot of the junction of the two paths leading to the first two great emanations of Deity—wisdom and love. One cannot reach either wisdom or love without passing through the sphere of Knowledge.

The genius serves a long apprenticeship in daath before he is ready to reach out for the fruits of wisdom and love and to manifest them in the form of beauty.

According to the Kabbalah there are four planes or worlds of being. The most exalted of these is that of Pure Spirit, only contacted by the Christs and Buddhas of this world. The second, the World of Creation, is open to man in so far as he is capable of original creation, for it is the plane of the Ideas of God, and in a lesser degree of mankind also. It is the archetypal world, where the patterns, as it were, of all which takes form on earth are fashioned. The third plane is the world of Formation, where the ideas take shape in mental forms before appearing in the world of matter. The fourth and lowest plane is the material universe. Thus we see that when a man attains to contact with his higher self on the creative plane he is capable of creation, for he is working in the idea world. He then thinks out his ideas in the world of formation and finally brings them to manifestation in the material world.

Every outstanding genius gives new types to the world. Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, all created types that live. Dickens will be remembered when famous writers upon whom we lavish praise to-day will be forgotten, merely because he created types. Painters create types called schools, "the school of Velasquez", "the school of Turner", and so on. Classical music is music created by men who burst the bonds of the commonplace, who gave to the world types for its future guidance, such as the great composers of the eighteenth century. Bach absorbed the church music of the pre-Reformation days and put into it his faith in God and his

enthusiasm. Handel created the oratorio in its modern shape, Gluck was the father of grand opera, Haydn popularized the symphony—all types for future generations. These types have become for us the expression of the peculiar characteristics of these geniuses, their lasting power in the world lies in the fact that they were able to bring through to the world that upon which personality depends—the higher self.

It may be said that talent materializes mind, while genius materializes spirit. A painter, writer, composer or sculptor puts on canvas or paper, into clay or stone something which does not exist at all in matter. A book is a collection of little black marks that carry to the mind of the reader ideas that have no existence on the physical plane. Music is said to be the most occult of the arts, because it is not only put on paper in the form of little symbols which convey the ideas of composers to the minds of musicians who can read them internally, but can be turned into audible music by means of instruments which also give out that which exists only in the mind of a composer, while adding at the same time the expression of the emotions awakened in the mind of the performer. Upon meditation all this assumes the aspect of a miracle.

Mozart once said, when questioned as to how ideas came to him, that he first of all *saw*, not heard, a composition as a whole, and that the writing down of it was merely child's play. The truly great often bring through more than they intend, as a teacher often finds himself imparting knowledge he did not know he possessed.

Talent lies hidden all around us for want of training and opportunity. Genius, on the other hand, trains itself if it can find no other teacher, and makes its own opportunities. Unlike talent, it is not much troubled by diffidence. Goethe, himself one of the great-

est of geniuses, remarked that only a dolt is modest, meaning, of course, that anyone possessing great powers is not shy about them. Blake said that a great man who did not know he was great must be a fool. Conceit is a different matter, it is not so much undue confidence in one's powers as expecting others to have a high opinion of them.

It is true that this knowledge of power often makes a genius an unpleasant companion, because he regards the rest of humanity merely as instruments for the furtherance of his aims, and because genius is often unconcerned with morals. The Higher Powers do not, however, seem to regard this as a bar to the delivery to the lower world of the fruits of higher planes. They become aware of a little being crawling on the surface of our earth who has by means of many incarnations of struggle, and of adherence through them all to high standards of beauty, developed certain qualities and capacities. "Ah!" say the Powers, "here is the channel for which we have been waiting. Let us pour through it the wonderful new message we have for the world." Genius is a lop-sided development, in which one special faculty has outrun the others, therefore he who possesses it is not necessarily a moral man. Goodness has its own form of genius to represent it on earth—namely, the Wise Man.

Great art is spirit manifesting in matter, and only spirit can speak to spirit. The expression of spirit can be appreciated by some, but can only be *understood* by those who are on the same level as the one who expresses it.

Talent is limited to the period in which it appears, but genius is for all time, not only because of its superior quality but because it works in and for the future, and knows beforehand what humanity will understand better as it develops and expands.

Genius knows its ability to tap the creative plane, but talent is often painfully aware of its own limitations. Lessing, in his play "Emilie Galotti", describes this attitude of mind. His hero is a talented young painter who takes his portrait of a beautiful princess to show to her husband. The prince expresses his delight with it, but the painter knows that all is not well with the portrait, and tells him what he feels about it in a passage still famous among artists, for Lessing was one of the greatest of art critics of his or any other time.

"All the same I am not satisfied with the picture, yet I am glad of my own dissatisfaction. Oh, if I could but paint straight from my eyes! So much is lost on the way from the eyes to the paint-brush! But I am proud to know how much is lost, and how and why, far prouder than I am of all the skill which has *not* been lost, because the possession of that knowledge shows me that I am really a great painter, and that it is only my hands which cannot paint."

What he is trying to say is that he is aware of a higher self which knows how to paint, but that his physical self cannot get it through in matter. Lessing is describing talent, not genius—genius does not talk like this—it gets it through.

One wonders at the difficulties which beset the path of the great. Perhaps an easy life would cover up the beauty and limit the spirit. Dr. Jacks finely says that "man is not made for a comfortable existence, but for difficult and dangerous operations".

In all systems for development, great stress is laid upon balance, the attainment of which is the most vital necessity for spiritual development, and the most difficult of all the tasks which confront humanity.

We are made of spirit and matter, if we leave out spirit we shall become un-

balanced and be cast out into utter darkness; if we try to be all spirit again we are unbalanced, and become useless to our fellowmen. This life on earth offers endless opportunities for opening up our powers, which may be the reason for our being thrown into this seething whirlpool of existence. Seeds do not germinate until they are put into the earth, they do not awaken without the aid of the lowest element. The spirit of man, maybe, cannot develop unless planted in earthly bodies, to push its way to the light in spite of frost, drought, hard soil, dark corners, and bad gardening.

If we fail to lift ourselves up on the cross of matter we shall be committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, that is, we shall be denying the divine spirit within us—the Christ within.

William Blake tells us to carry out all our spiritual desires, whether the medium we intend to use for manifesting be of the spirit or of the body.

Olive Harcourt.

THE THREE TRUTHS

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.

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.

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

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OFFICE NOTES

An international group of scholars numbering about one thousand will pool their efforts to publish a history of mankind, under the auspices of United Nations Educational and Cultural Organization. The purpose is to produce a work which will be as accurate and unbiassed as human effort and integrity can make it. People all over the world will thus be able to read comprehensive, unprejudiced accounts of human events. Histories written for national consumption and for use in schools within a nation, have almost invariably stressed the national viewpoint and national achievements disproportionately.

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Next year will be election year in the Theosophical Society when the President for the subsequent seven years will be elected. This will be an important election and the man or the woman who is chosen for the position will have a great opportunity to work with the cycle of the closing years of the first one hundred years of the Theosophical Movement. If a new messenger comes in or about 1975, and if during the intervening years no change has occurred, the fragmented, separated, little Theosophical organizations will hardly attract the attention of the Great Ones. Twenty-two years is not a long time, but the right person in the position of President could do a great deal towards re-establishing brotherliness and working co-operation among Theosophical students the world over, on the basis of a return to the original program of the Movement. If a President did that and nothing else during his term of office, he would have done well.

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The 66th Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society in America will be held at Olcott on July 19-23. Srimati Rukmini Devi will be the principal speaker. The Convention will be followed by a Summer School July 26-30.

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We note from *The American Theosophist* that Professor E. Wood spoke at the Binghamton Lodge on May 3rd and 4th and that Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn gave a series of four lectures at the Detroit Lodge. Birthday congratulations were sent to Mr. L. W. Rogers on his ninety-third birthday. Mr. Rogers will be remembered by the older members of the lodges in Eastern Canada through his lecture tours many years ago. Mr. Rogers is now living in Ojai, California.

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The May-June issue of *Theosophia* carries on the front page an excellent portrait of Madame H. P. Blavatsky taken between 1875 and 1878. Mention of this reminds us that it is some time

since we drew the attention of our readers to the splendid work being done by Mr. Boris de Zirkoff through this independent magazine. *Theosophia* has a new address, "The Oxford Building, 615 South Oxford Street, Los Angeles 5, California."

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And it is some time also since we acknowledged receipt of the many exchange magazines which are received regularly. We look forward to these and welcome them. From Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, Australia, come these indications of the amount of work which is being done in the name of Theosophy. Each magazine has its own personality, and these personalities give a cross section of the Movement. In some magazines there is a lack of independence of thought, an unquestioning conformity to the orthodoxies of neo-theosophy, which is quite disappointing. The writers walk softly as though reluctant or fearful to disturb the cloistered peace of the ivory tower. Only occasionally does one hear a faint and far-off echo of the clarion which once called the warrior souls together for renewed service in the unending war against ignorance and superstition. The United Lodge publications and the magazines of the independent groups are notably different.

THEOSOPHY AND THE YOUNGER GENERATION

In this important period when the ground is being prepared for the 1975 effort to enlighten mankind, it is interesting to find some indication of the ideas germinating in the younger generation. The following excerpt shows the independent conclusion arrived at by a young university student in a paper given to the Letters Club of the University of British Columbia after making a study of Aldous Huxley's later books, and his idea that we take lifetimes to reach the goal:—

"This idea of lifetimes leads me to one of the fundamental differences between Eastern and Western philosophies—the concept of reincarnation. Reincarnation does not imply re-embodiment of the physical body, but refers to rebirth of the soul in a new body. By a series of births and rebirths, the struggling soul may work towards perfection at its own speed. The Western concept of evolution extends only to the physical and mental realms and has been accepted generally for only about thirty years. The Indian teachers and learned men have taught of evolution for centuries. They extend their ideas to the spiritual world. These men teach that through continued rebirth in a new body, the soul evolves slowly towards its final goal—union with the Great Spirit, the Mind of the Universe. As it works nearer the goal, the soul gradually comes to realize that the actions of one life have a profound effect on the conditions of the next life. This law of action and result of action is known as Karma—the natural law of cause and effect which Westerners apply to the physical world but seldom to the spiritual. It constitutes the second main philosophical difference between East and West.

"Western religion and philosophy uphold a personalized God, a god with human emotions as anger and hate. Eastern philosophy tries to transcend the human and personal. It thinks of a god not as a personality, but as an impersonal mind—the unity of the universe. It is with this universal unity that each soul seeks, consciously or unconsciously, to merge itself."

THEOSOPHY IN MEXICO

The Aim and Guiding Principles of a Cosmopolitan Group of Students of Theosophy in the City of Mexico.

Having recognized in the teachings of Theosophy—as given out to the world at large by H. P. Blavatsky—the TRUTH

we have been in search of during this life and lives long gone by; and having recognized that the attainment of this TRUTH is the purpose of our existence, leading to the emancipation of the SOUL, a condition known in the East under such names as: Nirvana, Moksha, Kaivalya, Tong-pa-ni; and in the West as: Supreme Bliss, Final Beatitude, Union with God; and having realized that this Soul Satisfying TRUTH can only be obtained through strong search, sincere devotion, and the sacrifice of the self to the SELF;

We, students of Theosophy, have established since February 15th, 1929, weekly meetings for the purpose of:

- 1st. Acquiring an ever profounder knowledge and understanding of genuine THEOSOPHY, as given to us by its Custodians, the Masters of Wisdom, directly and through their agent, H. P. Blavatsky;
- 2nd. Helping others, without distinction of race, creed, sex, or colour, and without expectation of any reward, in their efforts to know this Soul Saving Knowledge; and,
- 3rd. Learning to apply Theosophy in our daily lives to the best of our abilities and with the intent of "Lifting the Mind of the Race," thus benefitting Mankind—the aim of every true Theosophist.

Our weekly meetings are guided by the following principles:

1. Only genuine THEOSOPHY, such as that of H.P.B.'s Secret Doctrine, shall be the object of our studies.

2. Every book, pamphlet, or article, which deals with theosophical subjects, may be used, but the writings of the Mahatmas themselves and of H.P.B. will always be our principal guide.

3. No dogmatic attitude shall be tolerated, but everyone making a statement must be prepared to demonstrate its validity on the basis of unimpeachable evidence and strict logic.

4. No one is bound to accept any statement, whether spoken or written, as long as its truth is not demonstrated to his own satisfaction.

5. Our meetings are democratic in the sense that everyone shall have to determine for himself to what extent he shall participate in the work undertaken, leaving each one to progress by self-induced and self-devised efforts, but letting no one interfere with the aim and purpose of the Group. In other words: A maximum of discipline imposed from within and a minimum from without.

6. The initiative shall be with those students who, by their long devotion and profounder acquaintance with Theosophy, are the better qualified for it, but they should never be set up, nor set themselves up as authorities in matters of TRUTH.

7. Our final judgment should solely be based upon FACTS, viewed under the Light of strict LOGIC and pure REASON.

REVIEWS

Poems by Harold Tyrwhitt, W. H. Lee & Sons Ltd., Mansfield, England. We have been and we still are living in times of such complexity and strain, that, once we relax, we cannot bear to think of what is still going on. Instead, have we not found that the moment we stop thinking about the present our old habits of mind will return out of the past, as fresh as if there had never been any feverish living?

After an interval of chaos, of frantic activity, the old dream of peace comes like a healing balm. Just to think of it without interruption seems to provide that state of restful quiet which allows body and soul to regain, each, its health and strength.

In such relaxed interludes poems like Harold Tyrwhitt's bear witness to the dream and to its recurring vitality. They come from one of England's enchanted regions, Minehead in Somerset,

and most of the poems are filled with a sense of communion with Nature which at least produces the conditions necessary for finding Peace. As he says at the end of the poem, 'Silence'

"Out of that silent Peace
Comes true creation."

M. H.

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The Tibetan Book of the Dead or The After-Death Experiences on the Bardo Plane, according to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English Rendering, by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. Second edition, 1949. Oxford University Press, Toronto, 248 pp. Price \$4.50.

Bardo-Thodol—Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane, is the Tibetan title of this book. "It is called the Great Liberation by Hearing because even those who have committed the five boundless sins are sure to be liberated if they hear it by the path of the ear . . . Those who meet with this doctrine are indeed fortunate . . . difficult is it to meet with it. Even when met with, difficult is it to comprehend it. Liberation will be won through simply not disbelieving it upon hearing it. Therefore treat this doctrine very dearly: it is the essence of all doctrines."

"Bardo" translates as "between two," and, used in this connection, means the intermediate, transitional state between death and rebirth.

Dr. Evans-Wentz, the editor, and Sir John Woodroffe, who writes the Foreword, believe it is one of the most remarkable works the West has ever received from the East. "As a contribution to the science of death, and of the experience after death and of rebirth it is, among the sacred books of the world, unique," they say.

The claim is that the Great Doctrine of the *Bardo Thodol* has the power to help embodied beings liberate themselves at the moment of death. "One should not forget its meanings and the

words even though pursued by seven mastiffs"—a reference to the fierce dogs numerous in most Tibetan villages. "As a catapult enables one to direct a great stone at a definite target or goal, so this Doctrine enables the deceased to direct himself to the Goal of Liberation."

Its message is that the art of dying is as important as living; that the future of being is dependent, perhaps entirely, upon a rightly controlled death. Part II, concerning the process of rebirth, provides five techniques by which rebirth may be prevented, or, alternatively, if rebirth is inevitable, how one's parents may be chosen and thus obtain "the great boon of a perfectly endowed and freed human body."

The teachings, more or less Tantric¹ are presented chiefly from the standpoint of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism of the Kargyutpa Sect to which Dr. Wentz and his scholarly guru, the late Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup, the translator, belonged and by which the *Bardo Thodol* is accepted as a sacred book. They follow neither the Red Cap teachings of Padma Sambhava—the first teacher in Tibet to commit to writing and expound the *Bardo Thodol* some 1200 years ago—nor the Yellow Cap School of Tsong-Kha-Pa.

Commencing at the moment of death, the dying one is exhorted to recognize the Clear Light of the Void, Nirvana, and thus liberate himself. According to the Bardo teaching, the ordinary person does not know he is dying and thus

¹ "In so far as the *Bardo Thodol* is a ritual based upon Yoga, and has for its chief matter the science of birth, death, and rebirth, interwoven with descriptions of the various states of existence and beings peopling the universe, and teaches of the ways of obtaining salvation, it is a Tantric work, although, strictly speaking, not a *Tantra*.—Footnote, p. 214.

passes into a trance-like state for 3½ to 4 days following his last physical breath, unaware that he is separated from his physical body. This period is the first of the three Bardos, called the Chikhai Bardo. Awakening to the fact that death has occurred, the Knower begins to experience the second, Chonyid Bardo, which merges into the third, Sidpai Bardo, and ends when rebirth occurs, usually in seven week's time, 49 days, according to the Bardo teachings.

Only those of great yogic knowledge and enlightenment escape all of the Bardos, maintain unbroken continuity of consciousness and attain liberation, which is the goal. If transference of consciousness successfully occurs, there are no Bardos, which involve the break of consciousness by death, and there is no need for the *Thodol* to be read. Otherwise the *Thodol* is read distinctly while the arteries on the right and left side of the throat are gently pressed to keep the dying person conscious and with his consciousness rightly directed. Also, pressing the arteries regulates the path and the chakra by which the soul leaves the physical body, the proper place being the brain center, the Sahasrara. The *Bardo Thodol* is concerned chiefly with but three chakras, the heart, throat and brain.

It is pointed out that if the dying one by himself has been capable of diagnosing the symptoms of death, he should have made use of the knowledge. If he has been unable to do so, then the guru, a chela or a brother in the faith should impress upon him that death is about to occur. With lips close to the ear of the dying one and speaking in a low tone of voice, he shall repeat the text distinctly. After expiration of the last breath, the nerve of sleep is pressed firmly and the reading continues with the statement that the deceased is now experiencing the Radiance of the Clear Light of Pure Reality, and he is exhorted to recognize it.

Assuming that the deceased is karmically bound to pass through the forty-nine days of the Bardo existence, the daily trials and dangers he must meet and triumph over during the first fourteen days are next explained to him in detail.

If, despite everything done during all these stages of the first and second Bardos, liberation is still not brought about, the text of the third Bardo is read and the deceased is commanded to "remember the teachings, remember the teachings." Liberation is still possible at this stage. "Ordinarily the miseries of the third, Sidpa Bardo, are experienced for about twenty-one days, but because of the determining influence of karma, a fixed period is not assured." If illusion overcomes the Knower then does he "wander to the doors of wombs" and the five techniques for escape from entering are given. That failing, the text concerning the possibility of a supernormal birth in the Happy Western Realm at the feet of the Buddha Amitabha is read. If that is not possible, return to the human world takes place.

As will be seen, there are several turning points during the forty-nine days during which liberation may be obtained if awe and terror do not overcome the Knower. Each person's after-death experiences are entirely dependent upon his own mental content, according to the Bardo teachings, and what is experienced are self-created thought forms.

Tribute is paid in the book to Madame Blavatsky whose intimate acquaintance "with the higher lamaistic teachings" is acknowledged and, regarding the esoteric meaning of the Forty-Nine Days of the Bardo, the student is referred to *The Secret Doctrine*, Original edition, 1888, Vol. I, p. 238, Stanza VII (5); and p. 411; also Vol. II, pp. 417, 627-28.

No brief review, or in fact any review, of this remarkable and scholarly work could possibly be adequate. It has great value for the Western student if it convinces him that the moment of death is extremely important. Beside that, of course, it is a reference book of unusual interest.

CORRESPONDENCE

Several letters and many oral comments were received relative to Dr. Wilks' article in the February issue and Mr. Weaver's reply thereto which appeared in April. Some of the letters were not intended for publication. One correspondent considers that it is a mistake to revive old controversies—the L.C.C. attracts its own and if they are happy and contented in their beliefs, why attack the religion which satisfies them?

One answer is that the intimate connection of the L.C.C. with the Theosophical Society has been one of the factors which has diverted the Society from its original purpose. That purpose was not to establish a new church, a new priestly caste, a new set of rituals and ceremonies, in a world already suffering from a superabundance of such psychological crutches. These things destroy independence. The Society exists to set men free, to encourage men to become mature and self-dependent. The criticism of the L.C.C. arises from its link with a Society which has totally different aims and objects. There are thousands of little religious sects which are never mentioned in Theosophical magazines—the Liberal Catholic sect is the only one which claims to be 'theosophical'.

Another writer says, "Regarding the L.C.C., etc., the position occupied by Theosophy exposes it to invasion and infiltration from all sides. This position, as I understand it, is that of a detached, non-creedal centre of Intelligence able

not only to reconcile the sixteen bibles of the world, but also to resolve all problems of religion, science, ethics and philosophy; in short a catalyst, in the presence of which religious vagaries instantly resolve themselves into aspects of eternal Truth. . . . But present the problem individually to twenty people and you will be apt to get twenty different solutions. The United Lodge, for example, meets the issue by ignoring it—in spades. Another group would embrace assertive, even militant theosophy and practice it with such zeal that 'its sparkle and rays just must penetrate' to those misguided Neos basking superiorly in the fitful deceptive light of a soul-soiling psychism. The direct-actionists would of course forcibly invite the neos to take lodgings next door, with the papacy."

"A Student" from Montreal writes, "In reference to the article by Cedric Weaver in *The Canadian Theosophist* of April, may I clarify his statement regarding the L.C.C. activities and Eastern Lodges.

"The world upheaval has brought theosophical students from other countries into Canada and some are representative of the L.C.C. They come to lodge meetings and naturally invite the members to their particular church service. Some of the newer students, unaware of the pseudo-occultism they run into, join and form L.C.C. groups, as for instance in Montreal; others more doubtful make enquiries and voice their disinclination. And so, the older student still has the unpleasant task of "raking up events of twenty-five years ago" because no official informative booklet was ever issued by the Canadian Society as to the status of the major Theosophical successor movements! . . . The Theosophical Society had outside the Brotherhood ideal, a definite educational purpose and this did *not* consist in diverting the 'pure stream of Oriental

philosophy' into Christian theological channels."

The Editors of *Theosophical Notes* (Box 65, Berkley, California) sent in a long letter, the greater part of which is printed below:

"Dear Mr. Barr:

We wish to make some comments on Cedric Weaver's reply, in your April issue, to Dr. Wilks' article in the February issue. Dr. Wilks pointed out, with solid facts of history and the teachings of Theosophy themselves, the absurdities and iniquities of the course taken away from Theosophy by the Society under Annie Besant and Leadbeater, and which largely remain to cripple the work. Mr. Weaver counters with the familiar theme that the Society stands, and was meant to stand for anything anyone chooses to believe or teach. He opens:

"In the February issue Dr. Wilks has once more demonstrated that while he is capable of writing an excellent article, he invariably spoils it by his apparent assumption that his own opinion is that of the Theosophical Society . . ."

We have read and re-read Dr. Wilks's article and are quite unable to discover in it any such statement or even implication. The indication in fact is to the contrary. The opinions he upholds are those of himself and those who think like him—who fortunately seem to constitute a growing number.

(The Editors then quote a portion of Mr. Weaver's reply in which he suggests that Dr. Wilks' comment on the personal God idea borders on blasphemy). If Mr. Weaver thinks that Dr. Wilks is being blasphemous, we suggest that he read what the Mahatma K.H. says in Letter X, pp. 57-58 of *The Mahatma Letters*.

If this is not enough, let him refer to Letter XXII, p. 138, and to Letter CXXXIV, p. 461; and to *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 578, Original Edition, or p. 632, Third and Revised. Now, are we to suppose that Personages who

wrote in this manner had any notion of fostering a Society in which these "personal God" religions were to be passed by without a comment, let alone *encouraged*? Was the Society founded in order that its members should remain silent on the cause of two-thirds of the world's evils? What kind of hypocrites would that make the Masters—and H. P. B., who was equally outspoken? Has Mr. Weaver, by any chance, ever read *Isis Unveiled*? What then did the Founders mean by expressed neutrality of the Society on religious questions? The only possible sensible interpretation is that it welcomed people of all beliefs, not with the object of encouraging those beliefs, but in the hope that their victims would find out about them and change them; it encouraged the mutual study of them because any real study of them would put an end to them in all such delusive forms.

In any case, it is obvious enough that the right to express a religious belief in the Society involves an equal right to *oppose* it—in the very nature of neutrality itself. How else is anybody to learn anything or ameliorate his beliefs? If Mr. Weaver thinks that "blasphemy" in the way of outspoken expression, is out of order, let him quarrel with H.P.B. and the Masters, not Dr. Wilks. How, in view of the facts of history and the position of the Mahatmas themselves, is one to arrive at an understanding of all religions, without anything derogatory being said of any of them? In the matter of whether one "must renounce his God before he can become a Theosophist"—we do not find that Dr. Wilks said anything of the kind. There is, however, a distinction between a member of the Society, who may legitimately believe anything or nothing, and a Theosophist, who as a matter of simple honesty, in order to merit that term, must believe something resembling the teachings originally taught under that name and what is held

by Those who set them forth. If he insists on believing something opposite, that is his right, but he has no right to call it Theosophy or himself a Theosophist. Aside from being dishonest in principle, it is a fraud on the public, and a stumbling block to those who do hold to the Theosophy of the Masters.

A large part of the argument has to do with whether an officer of the Society has a right to preach his own particular belief in it. We are not much concerned with this. What we do say, however, is that if his elevation to his position is in part due to being considered a Theosophist, and if he is not a Theosophist, he is in that position under false pretenses. If he wants to hold office as a Christian or any other sectarian, let him run for office as such. It would be a good way to find out what part Theosophy *does* play in the present Society.

There was a very small, obscure sect called the Old Catholic Church at the time of founding the Society. It had much the same standing among the various sects as one in modern America embracing a total membership of twelve. It was picked up, rejuvenated, and furnished with a whole new set of "scientific" ceremonial by Mr. Leadbeater, and the manners by which its new priests achieved their ordinations were curious, devious, and dubious. Some of the documentation on this was referred to in our number for July, 1951. The relationship between this little sect and the present cuckoo-egg arrangement of the Liberal Catholic Church within the Society is about the same as that between the true Rosicrucians, who left for India in the eighteenth century, and the two present Rosicrucian societies, which appropriated the name for themselves a few years ago. It would be very interesting, if one could be found living, to get the opinion of a prelate of the *original* Liberal Catholic Church outside

of Theosophical connections, on both the dogmas and the origin of the present hybrid.

That forgotten little sect was the original egg. That the present thing was hatched out of it and by Theosophists, so-called, is true in the fullest sense. Let Mr. Weaver dig up its ordinances and creeds as they were before it was adopted, and let us see what they look like! It is true that membership in it was never compulsory; but Mr. Weaver has either forgotten or never known that for a considerable period non-membership definitely made one a second-class citizen in the T.S. All its prominent figures belonged to it and tried to get everybody else to join. That it has been squeezed out of this position even to the degree that it is, is due to gradual enlightenment brought about by men like Dr. Wilks.

Mr. Weaver preaches quite a sermon on the necessity of examining all beliefs. "To forbid or deny, to ourselves or others, any source of information is to violate the whole purpose of this Society, and to expect others to accept blindly our own opinions is to nullify that purpose entirely." Unless, of course, the source of information is somebody like Dr. Wilks, or *The Mahatma Letters*. And who, other than the leaders so identified with that Church, expected anything of the kind?

It is a common fable that membership in such organizations are stepping stones to knowledge. The only sense in which they are, is through the victim finding out that they are snares and delusions. In which function Dr. Wilks is aiding mightily in making the L.C.C. useful in the only sense that it *can* be. If Mr. Weaver wants to argue that, let him argue with the Mahatmas.

Sincerely,

Editors,
Theosophical Notes."

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