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WHITE LOTUS DAY

H. P. Blavatsky died on May 8, 1891, but the sixty-two years which have passed since then tell, not of death, but of life, expanding, growing and moving into many phases of the racial consciousness.

The viability of the Theosophical Movement, its power to continue to live and grow despite conditions which seemed certain to destroy it, is evidence of the basic truth of the body of doctrines which it promulgates. Our human foolishness and downright stupidity, our egotism and self-righteousness have hampered and diverted the free flow of its power—but despite popular distortions of the original message, despite the effects of the power complexes of many 'leaders', despite the activities of little 'holier-than-thou' groups within the Movement, and despite also the pathetic inertia of thousands of members, the Theosophical Movement does go forward. Each year new fires are kindled from the ancient Flame; each year eager, valiant and enthusiastic souls join one or another of the Theosophical Societies, and so become members of the Movement which is above all organizations. The effects of their action is long

lasting, though many cannot endure for long the cold rigidity of the theosophical organizational machines, nor the disparity between ideals and practices.

Theosophy, however, has a curiously enduring hold upon the minds of its adherents. Each year now as we grow older, we meet one or two former members who had left the Society because of some bitter difference which seemed so important at the time. A recent meeting brought this to mind; a former member had dropped out about fifteen year ago—but what that particular war was fought over, she had almost forgotten. But she had never broken away from the Movement; her whole attitude towards life was conditioned by her theosophical background.

That Movement is composed of all men and women who, regardless of organizational affiliations or lack of these, have taken into their beings the elixir of immortality, the principles of Theosophy. On White Lotus Day all members of that Movement renew their vows of loyalty to the ancient cause, and unite in paying their deep respects to the wise, self-sacrificing soul who brought the Message, H. P. Blavatsky, the agent of the Masters of Wisdom.

WHAT IS A GOOD LECTURE?

BY EMILY SELLON
Olcott Foundation Committee

In these days of new techniques in communication, many people are turning to group dynamics, radio and dramatic presentations, visual aids, round table discussions, and so on, as methods of presenting Theosophy to the public, and as alternatives to the time-honoured public lecture. Granted that these diversified methods, correctly handled, have great usefulness, it is nevertheless the view of many that they should be used to supplement lectures and classes, not supplant them, for different types of communication have varying aims, and probe a subject at various levels. Well-designed public work should evaluate all these methods, and achieve the maximum of effect on all levels by tying them into an overall, sustained and systematic educational program. For this, one important problem is how the public lecture can best play a successful role in such a program. The Olcott Foundation has been created to encourage work in this field, through the annual awards it makes for the best lecture submitted to its judges. As it is now soliciting entries, it seems appropriate to consider just what constitutes a good lecture.

First of all, we must ask ourselves what we feel the purposes of public lectures (or any public work) to be. Surely, our aim is educative. We want to educate the public to a greater appreciation of theosophical concepts and principles, and thus to awaken an interest in further study. We are not trying to convert people to a particular view of life; we are trying to open windows, not to close doors. Therefore, a good public lecture must not be propagandist, but educative, in the best sense. If this is the aim, the content is all important: it must be sound, rational and pertinent, and it must sedulously avoid

the questionable or the sensational. It must embody study and research, but even more, thought, for it should never be merely repetitive of the ideas of others, no matter how lofty these may be. This, of course, does not mean it is to be pretentious or stuffy. Freshness of approach, originality of thought, clarity of expression, new ways of applying familiar truths—all these can make any subject, no matter how difficult, vivid and interesting.

A good lecture, needless to say, does not preach, nor talk down to the audience, nor make assumptions—other than that the audience is reasonable, intelligent, literate, and sympathetic to new ideas. These basic assumptions every speaker must make. The language used should be such as is familiar to its listeners, that is, customary among well-educated people, and if unusual or specific terms are used, they are to be carefully explained, in meaning and connotation. And the lecture, of course, begins at the point where its audience is, moving only gradually into unfamiliar territory. (No sudden leaps to the Moon Chain.) Relevance we must stress again; for success with the public we must take cognizance of today's achievements, needs and problems. Theosophy can make impact upon our times only if it *is* of our times—as well as being timeless.

These are essentials. We are all aware that the brilliant lecture, as distinguished from the passable one, must be a compound of many factors: content, style, delivery, and not least, the speaker himself. Of course, the last cannot be present in any anonymous written manuscript, but it must not be forgotten. Some very successful lectures have not been as long or strong in

content as we might wish, but such have been the gifts of person and the persuasiveness of the speaker that he could easily charm a bird off a tree, in Sanskrit. The projection of personality is intangible, but all-important. Gifts of personal delivery may be considered part of public lecturing and not of the lecture *per se*, but it is important to realize that it is the spoken, not the written word, which is being evaluated. A lecture is designed to be heard, not read, and so, though it must be literate, it should not be judged as literature.

Finally, a lecture should embody the principle of *holism*. That is, it should be an integrated and organic whole, all

of a piece, so that it can present, vividly and completely, one picture of the universe, one grand idea, one principle, one concept. It is only in this way that the impact of a lecture may not be scattered, but directed as one blow, so to speak.

Does all this sound a tall order? Of course it does. But in all our public work we should demand nothing but the best of ourselves, if we want to serve the cause of Theosophy effectively. Even if we fall short of our goals (which of course we do, being human), the standard should be high. "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

The American Theosophist, March, 1953

DEVACHAN

Complaint is sometimes made that when one goes to Devachan much time is lost away from earth-life, where otherwise unselfish work for others might be continued by instantly returning to it after death. The reason given is that Devachan is an illusion, while the so-called illusions of earthly existence are in such a sense real that they are preferable to those of Devachan. In illustration of this, the supposed case is given of a parent in Devachan imagining that the beloved child is also there, when, in fact, the child not yet physically dead remains on earth perhaps in misery or leading a life of vice. This is the root of the objection—the supposed illusionary character of Devachan as compared to earth-life.

Now these feelings are always due to the thirst for life in the form which presently is most known to us, that is, in a physical body. We cannot argue Devachan away any more than we can the necessity of incarnation upon this earth; the one is as philosophically necessary as is the other. A very easy

way out of the difficulty—which arises almost wholly from our feelings—would be calmly to accept the law as it stands, being willing to take whatever may be our fate; whether that be in Devachan or in this earth-life. Our likes and dislikes can have no effect on the course of nature, but they may have an effect on ourselves which will be far from beneficial. For the dwelling upon pleasure or the constant desire to fly from "pain not yet come" will inevitably create Karmic causes which we would wish to avoid.

But perhaps there are some considerations on the subject of Devachan which may be of use. In the first place, I have never believed that the period given by Mr. Sinnett in *Esoteric Buddhism* of fifteen hundred years for the stay in that state, was a fixed fact in nature. It might be fifteen minutes as well as fifteen hundred years; but it is quite likely that for the majority of those who so constantly wish for a release and for an enjoyment of heaven, the period would be more than fifteen hundred years. In-

deed, the Hindu scriptures give many special ceremonies for the attainment of heaven, or the regions of Indra, which is Devachan; and those ceremonies or practices are said to cause a stay in Indraloka "for years of infinite number".

The first question, however, must be, "What is the cause for passing into Devachan?" Some have said that it is good Karma or good acts that take us and keep us there, but this is a very incomplete reply. Of course, in the sense that it is happiness to go into that state, it may be called good Karma. But it does not follow that the man whose life is good, passed in constant unselfish work for others without repining, and free from desire to have somewhere his reward, will go to Devachan. Yet his Karma must be good; it must act on him, however, in other lives, for the earth-life is the place where such Karma has its operation. But if at the same time that he is thus working for others he wishes for release or for some place or time when and where he may have rest, then, of course, he must go to Devachan for a period which will be in proportion to the intensity of those desires.

Again, it should not be forgotten that the soul must have some rest. Were it, before becoming bright as the diamond, hard as adamant and strong as steel, to go on working, working through earth-life without a break between, it must at last succumb to the strain and come to nothing. Nature, therefore, has provided for it a place of rest—in Devachan; and that we should thankfully accept if it fall to our lot.

But does Devachan suffer in the comparison made between it and this life on earth? To me it seems not. Human life is as great an illusion as any. To the sage Ribhu, Vishnu said it was the longest-lived reign of fancy. To say that it is a terrible thing to think of a

mother in Devachan enjoying its bliss while the child is suffering on earth, is to prefer one illusion to another, to hug a philosophical error to the breast. Both states are out of the true, while the Ego, who is the real witness, sees the lower personality struggling with these phantoms while it, whether the body be living or its other part be in Devachan, enjoys eternal felicity. It sits on high unmoved, immovable. The great verse in the Isa Upanishad settles this matter for me in these words; "What room is there for sorrow and what for doubt in him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind, though differing in degree?" Therefore if I believe this, I must also know that, no matter whether I and my best beloved are in Devachan or on earth, they and I must forever partake of the highest development attained by the greatest of sages, for, as they and I are spiritual beings, we must have communion forever on the higher planes of our being.

Then, again, the fact seems to be lost sight of that each night we go into a sort of Devachan—the dream state or sleep without dream. The loving mother, no matter how unfortunate or evil her child, must sleep, and in that state she may have dreams of her loved ones around her in just the very condition of mind and body she would have them enjoy. If Devachan be objectionable, why not also rebel against our necessary sleep, which acts on our physical frame to give it rest, as Devachan does upon our more ethereal parts?

Lying unnoticed at the foot of this matter is the question of time. It goes to the very root of the objection, for the aversion to the stay in Devachan is based upon the conception of a *period of time*. This period—given or supposed as fifteen hundred years—is another great illusion which can be easily proved to be so. What we call time, measured by our seconds and minutes

and hours, is not necessarily actual time itself. It is not the ultimate precedence and succession of moments in the abstract. For us it depends on and flows from the revolutions of our solar orb, and even with that standard it can be shown that we do not apprehend it correctly. We speak of seconds, but those are such as our watchmakers give us in the watch. They might be made longer or shorter. They are arrived at through a division of a diurnal solar revolution, the observation of which is not necessarily mathematically accurate. If we lived on Mercury—where we must believe intelligent beings live—our conception of time would be different. From our childhood's experience we know that even in this life our appreciation of the passage of time rises and falls, for in early youth the twelve months from one Christmas to another seemed very, very long, while now they pass all too quickly. And from watching the mental processes in dreams we know that, in the space of time taken

for a bell to drop from the table to the floor, one may dream through a whole lifetime, with all the incidents of each day and hour packed into such a limited period. Who can tell but that in a Devachanic state of three months the person may go through experiences that seem to cover thousands of years? If so, why not say for him—since time as we know it is an illusion—that he was in Devachan for those thousands?

Devachan, however, is not a meaningless or useless state. In it we are rested; that part of us which could not bloom under the chilling skies of earth-life bursts forth into flower and goes back with us to another life stronger and more a part of our nature than before; our strength is revived for another journey between deaths. Why shall we repine that nature kindly aids us in the interminable struggle; why thus ever keep the mind revolving about this petty personality and its good or evil fortune?

Wm. Q. Judge,
The Path, Vol. V., No. 6,

THE SLEEPING SPHERES *(Continued from Page 31)*

So the heart awoke, struggling with the vain assertions of matter, and all at once saw that itself was at once the runner and the goal, the seer and the thing seen. It came face to face with its Ideal and saw that Ideals are causes, saw that the Ideal is the only Real. Then with infinite pain it arose, and turned back upon the world-path, and closed the eyes of the mind for a space upon the world of matter; it left the material husks and the brutish part of itself and strove to return to the Father. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights, in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The heart reached up to that unchanging Father, the Elder Light that

"lighteth every man that cometh into the world": The Mahâtma and that Light are not different.

Thus it was that the various scenes of Life passed very rapidly before me. In each I seemed to have a choice, and the choice appeared to be for either spirit or matter, for the formed or for the formless and unformulated, for evolution or against it, for rigidity and coagulation in a fixed, unprogressive mould, or away from the stationary to the ever-living. For the most part I appeared to understand all the varied experiences of this long, long Thought, But here and there were some I did not understand. I had not fully tasted them. I had, as it were, been forced to

quit them too soon.

So soon as this thought came before my mind, my experience divided itself into two parts. One part was made up of the higher impulses, the clear intuitions, the brightest dreams for others' good. In these I felt a quiet certainty that I was upon the only path the soul could tread uprightly, the only path in which it could find full satisfaction, interior peace. In the other part a voice within seemed to whisper of great deeds to be done, glories to be achieved, knowledge of life to be attained, and through my whole being flashed an impulse towards action. I must be up and doing, I must come into objective contact with everything, I must prove everything, and that proof must be external, tangible, visible to the world. My very soul seemed to battle to and fro between these conditions, these two parts of itself. Now the outer action was everything, and now the interior certainty alone was to be relied upon. My thoughts surged to and fro, like lightning flashes.

All at once I felt I could no longer struggle; I must go forth into Life and taste and feel and do. With this, a flame seemed to sweep over and devour me. Every wish I ever had poured into my mind. Armies of wishes, myriads of desires, pressing upon me, tearing at me. More and more fiercely a bottomless sea of cravings poured in tumult through my brain. One interminable, mad dance of remembrance, scene upon scene, picture after picture. Germs of I knew not what woke up and ran, in uproarious riot, through the brain, until lands and ships; stars and homes; men, women, creatures, and angels; meadows and mountains; flowers, books, gems, food, fruits, garments, music, dreams; haunting eyes; snatching hands; innumerable faces; skies and herbage and growths of every clime; wars and silences; banners and colours; hopes, fears,

alarms, wealth, disease, poverty, desires, danger, loves, hatreds, deaths, and lives, and all the content of the world of forms pressed in upon the brain in one vivid lightning bolt, distracting, inviting, receding, advancing, and I wanted to do all and to feel all, instantaneously, with a huge, insatiable appetite, a voracious maw for the whole of Sense-Life at a single breath.

I felt a hunger that no experience could satiate; an intolerable need to fill myself full with experience. I desired to lie abroad on all the hills, to live in all the creatures. I burned to be a thousand, a million human beings all at once, and to feel the palpitant, seething whole of life through a million channels; to play every part, to feel, *feel*, FEEL, till every sense was asleep; till every sensuous atom should fail and yet should know itself unsatisfied while yet one single point of Life remained untasted, unabsorbed. This was the saturnalia of Desire. I was learning that the desire for Form-Life does not cease with gratification. I was in torment in the Kâmaloka, and the World-Desire made sport of me.

Yet not for long! Something within me arose and bade the wild procession cease. It was that other part of me which arose, majestic, calm. From the inner place of peace rang out all clarion-wise and clear the deep "I AM" of the soul. As flee the miasmatic mists before the sun rays, so fled the troops of Desire before the sun of the soul. The deepest need of my nature manifested itself. It was the need of *being*, and not the desire of doing. The noblest dreams I had ever had of principles made manifest through duty done, arose, one by one, gracious and full of peace. I remembered that what I had ever needed and never found, *was* The Peace. And its doors flew open before me; and it became one with me, became my own soul. For I remembered the Teachers,

the Light-bringers. I recalled the Master-Soul, the One. And at this thought a clear, sweet bell smote the air, and from the invisible spaces the Companions gathered round about and looked upon the Symbol of the Shadow; the Star of the one Darkness; the mystic emblem of Unity. And I remembered that I was one with Soul and Nature, and not separate, and my soul knelt before the One, the Unity, and adored Truth in silence. And so I entered the Peace. Thus doing, I dreamed, and now I was a sleeping Sphere, calmly resting as a "delicate milky film upon the golden ocean of light", for I had unknowingly cast aside every body and was a "dweller of the Sphere", myself that Sphere.

The fret and fever were over; gone the turbulence of desire, the scintillating thoughts. In an infinite leisure I seemed to rest, to repose. Thought was all, was all in all, and my only thought was Peace. So I *was* Peace, in a state of Being where to think is to be. Then slowly arose and expanded before me the highest and holiest aspirations of my life. First, the loved ones, whom I had yearned to know fully. And one by one I knew their soul-selves completely. All their suppressed hopes and loves stood out before me, crystal clear. They were what they had longed to be and not what life had seemed to make them. Here and there must they have been scattered; some as human beings on earth; some as Spheres in the ether; but to me was no distinction; all dwelt in my heart; each was myself. Dream upon dream bloomed delicately before me; I experienced each one. Of each I took my fill. That is to say, I dwelt long in thought upon every noble ideal and lived each one through to the core. I seemed to assimilate each until I became the very thought itself. I had

(Continued on Page 44)

NOTES BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to announce the death on April 18 of Mrs. Ethel Allan, a well-known member of Toronto Lodge. Mrs. Allan joined the Society in 1919 when the Canadian Lodges were still connected with the Theosophical Society in America. Mrs. Allan had a deep interest in astrology and for several years conducted classes at the Toronto Lodge; she also contributed articles to *The Canadian Theosophist*. In later years her increasing deafness limited her activities and she ceased to attend meetings. A Theosophical funeral service was held on April 21.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to her son and daughter-in-law Mr. and Mrs. John C. Allan of Peterborough, and to other members of the family.

* * * *

The sudden death of Mrs. Alberta Jean Rowell on Monday evening, April 27, came as a shock to her many friends. She had been absent from the Toronto Lodge Secret Doctrine Class for several Sundays, but few realized the seriousness of her illness.

Mrs. Rowell, who was a graduate from Columbia University, came in touch with Theosophical teachings over thirty years ago in New York, where she attended meetings of the United Lodge of Theosophists. She became a member of Toronto Lodge in 1948, and was well-known through her articles and book reviews in *The Canadian Theosophist* and other Theosophical publications.

We join with her many friends in saying farewell for a time to another comrade of the way. E. L. T.

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Just before going to press word was received of the death of another member of many years standing, Mr. Guy

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EXECUTIVE MEETING

The General Executive of the Theosophical Society in Canada met on the 12th of April at the Guild of All Arts where they were guests of Col. Thomson for dinner and later on for business at his residence in Coreycliffe.

Members present were Miss Hindsley, Messrs. Dudley Barr, Charles Hale, George I. Kinman and the General Secretary. The Minutes of the last meeting were approved. The Financial Statement was read by the General Secretary who moved its adoption. Mr. Barr reported for the magazine and suggested that the article recently printed viz. "Outline of Theosophy" be produced in

pamphlet form for distribution to the lodges. This was agreed upon. The aftermath of the presidential election was then discussed and the matter closed. The election of officers for the coming year was on the agenda, but as the closing date for nominations had been deferred until the 15th April the returns were not yet all in, therefore the General Secretary was empowered to take the necessary steps for an election if found necessary without calling a special meeting. A very interesting discussion then took place regarding some questions brought forward by the General Secretary concerning autonomy of lodges, etc., especially in connection with the rejection of persons applying for membership and demits from one lodge to another. It appears that there is nothing laid down in the Constitution regarding this except a provision to the effect that Lodges may form their own by-laws, which must conform with the spirit of the Constitution. Thus it seems that a lodge may reject an application if it deems fit. One member voiced the opinion that no application should be refused and cited H.P.B. to that effect; another, that although it was not laid down there was such a thing as precedent, and the British Law was mainly based on precedence. Finally it was decided that as a lodge has the right to form its own by-laws, it was within its right to refuse an application if for various reasons it deemed fit. A concrete case was thereupon brought forward by the General Secretary to whom it had been referred, of a member who wished to be demitted to another lodge, but that lodge had turned the application down. On going into the details, the meeting decided that the lodge in question had the constitutional right to decline the application and that we (the General Executive) had no authority to interfere with that decision. The General Secretary was instructed to write

to that effect. The next meeting was arranged for the 12th July, 1953.

General Secretary.

NOTES BY GENERAL SECRETARY

(Continued from Page 39)

Denbigh of Vulcan, Alta., who died on Feb. 27. Mr. Denbigh joined the Society through the American Section, and when the Vulcan Lodge was formed under the Canadian Society, he became president, a position which he held for many years. Mr. Denbigh was an ardent student of Theosophy and a staunch supporter of the Blavatsky tradition.

Our deep sympathy is extended to Mrs. Denbigh.

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The nominations for officers of the General Executive of the Theosophical Society in Canada are now in and it appears thereby that as no other names are submitted that the lodges are satisfied with the present regime. Such being the case there is no occasion to hold an election—therefore I declare the present General Secretary and Members of the Executive to be in office for another year.

E. L. Thomson,

OFFICE NOTES

An interesting series of monthly lectures is being presented at the Unitarian Church, Sixth and Cedar Streets, San Diego, California, by a group of unaffiliated theosophical students. Dr. Alvin B. Kuhn is one of the speakers. In the current program which covers the April to July lectures, an editorial is quoted from the *New York Tribune* of May 10, 1891, *A Tribute to H. P. Blavatsky*, which ends, "That (her personal influence) will go on with the impulse it has received, and some day, if not at once, the loftiness and purity of

her aims, the wisdom and scope of her teachings, will be recognized more fully, and her memory will be accorded the honour to which it is justly entitled." The activities of this group of unaffiliated students may be an indication of a growing tendency within the Theosophical Movement for groups of persons to avoid the 'party lines' of Theosophical Societies, and without creating any elaborate organizational setup, to work together as a group in carrying on the message.

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We have read with much interest the current issue of *Voice*, a ten page quarterly magazine devoted to Universal Brotherhood. The articles which are from writers in England, Scotland, United States, Japan, India, Italy, Algeria, Denmark, Sumatra, Australia, Iran and Mexico, stress tolerance, goodwill, peace and fellowship. *The Mandala of the Eight Paths* is illustrated by a design indicating that the 'way' in all religions leads ultimately to the same goal, Spirit. Mr. F. O. Howard of Croydon Lodge, Theosophical Society, England, contributes an article *A Theosophist Speaks of Universal Brotherhood*. The Russian Religious Association asks for gifts of the literature of religions, spiritual movements and orders—literature concerning Theosophical teachings is first on the list of requests. Gifts should be sent to The Reverend Iwan Petresky, President, Russian Religious Association, Institute Biblique, 39 Grand Rue, Najent-sur Marne (Les-N.E.) Paris, France. The annual subscription to the *Voice* is 2 S. 6d, and should be sent to Voice Publishers, 8 Watling Road, Southwick, Sussex, England.

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Mr. and Mrs. E. Norman Pearson, who spent the last two years lecturing and travelling and attending the School of the Wisdom at Adyar, returned to

the United States in January. They visited Toronto Lodge on May 2 and 3; Mrs. Pearson spoke on the 2nd and Mr. Pearson on the 3rd. At an informal reception on May 2, the Toronto Lodge members had an opportunity to renew acquaintanceship with these two active workers.

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An organization which is doing important work in spreading a knowledge of the religious and philosophical literature of Asia is The American Academy of Asiatic Studies, a non-profit graduate school with headquarters at 2030 Broadway, San Francisco 15, California. This Spring prospectus of the Extension Courses includes lectures on Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, and Oriental Thought and Christianity. The Graduate Division for M.A. and Ph. D. Degrees is limited to those holding B.A. degrees, but the Extension Courses are open to all who are interested.

CORRESPONDENCE

21 Haslemere Avenue,
East Barnet, Herts., England.

The Editor,
Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Jinarajadasa draws attention to dextro and laevo forms after having read my article on "Platonics" in the October issue. Had he studied the photo reproduction more carefully, this dextro-laevo effect would have become apparent in the two reversed models of the interlaced tetrahedra. This is the natural outcome of geometrical inversion, for this male-female arises in all form-dichotomy, even as it does in the *Jod of the Tetragrammaton*.

One notices how the really important occult and spiritual significances of these solids are missing from Theosophical books, and from articles edited by students claiming serious study of the subject. These real significances

are repeatedly overlaid with faulty 'facts' which blissfully float in a woolly mush of authoritarian statement and brain-mind implications of spherical trigonometry.

I have not seen the book by Señor Soria—it must be very profound—but I fail to detect even the smallest contribution to Theosophy or even useful philosophy in such propositions as 'Dodeca-eikosa-triaconhedrons'. At least I doubt if that particular order of scholastic salvation has any repute in Tchigadze.

Mr. Jinarajadasa recalls Mr. G. R. S. Mead, and probably he may know that this gentleman imposed upon Theosophical credulity the statement that twelve spheres, pressing equally round a central thirteenth sphere, would generate a Rhombic dodecahedron! This is mere scholastic rubbish, because a Pentagonal dodecahedron results every time the experiment is tried.

As a constructive contribution, may I say that the five interlaced cubes, also featured with my own solids, give the vital point sought on the lower edge of the tetrahedron—the point of intersection.

Why should this have been problematic or a matter of uncertainty? A *Secret Doctrine* form of 'copulation' of 3-4-5, or triangle, square and pentacle, and their correct relation on a tetrad face, gives results even likely to perplex a Boston mathematician.

For the benefit of students, the angle from the apex of the equilateral triangle can be proven to be 7 deg. 46 min.—actually a few seconds less, so I am assured by my sixteen-year-old school-boy son who kindly checked my own more ancient figures.

This angle intersects the triangle base at the point required, and its tangent in terms of the perpendicular

centre line gives the dimension essential to each side of it. Says H.P.B. "Such is the *mysterious* power of occult symbolism—recorded in a few geometrical signs and glyphs" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 293.

Is Theosophy *always* to be confounded with academic pursuits? Is the real significance of her message *always* to be overlaid, and belittled as 'amateur' by the flashy psychisms of pseudo-Theosophy?

Yours fraternally,

Grahame W. Barratt.

REVIEW

The Eternal Truths of Life, by Arthur Robson, Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, 1952, 296 pp. including index and glossary, Rs. 7-14 (\$3.00).

This is an important book and can be heartily recommended. It is based upon *The Mahatma Letters* and passages therefrom are quoted and commented on. The importance of the study of Karma is mentioned in *The Mahatma Letters*; "You can do nothing better than to study the two doctrines—Karma and Nirvana—as profoundly as you can." In a sense the book is a study of these two subjects. The chapter "A Common Misconception of Karma" is especially one that will arouse discussion. The author considers that what happens to one objectively is not one's Karma. A summary of his views is, "There appears to be *no* ground for the belief that everything that happens to one in life is of necessity the result of something that one had done in the past, either in this life or an earlier one." In support of this he quotes page 310 M.L., "Our chelas are helped but when they are innocent of the causes that lead them into trouble; when such causes are generated by foreign, outside influences." (But in conjunction with this see, the often quoted passage in *The*

Secret Doctrine Vol. I, p. 705,, "But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life.")

The author does not accept the idea of 'Lords of Karma', pointing out that there is no mention of such beings in *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key*, or any other writings of H.P.B. He brands this concept as peculiar to 'post-Blavatsky' Theosophy, or what others have termed 'Neo-Theosophy' or 'Leadbeaterianism'.

The chapters on after-death states, with their abundant quotations from *The Mahatma Letters*, may cause some of the 'post-Blavatsky' theosophists to revise their beliefs. In Chapter 11, "Entering Anew Into Physical Life", the author mentions, and apparently accepts, Dr. Besant's concept of the permanent atom as set forth in her *A Study in Consciousness*, but points out that this term is not used anywhere in *The Letters*, (nor may we add, in Blavatsky writings.)

In the last six chapters, the author speaks of the Path, detachment, nirvana, and the Triunity, the latter term meaning the bringing into accord the three 'selves' the Brahman, Vishnu, Siva aspects of our nature. To achieve this is to attain that perfect balance which is Nirvana. In "the Noble Path", it is stated that often only a hair's breadth separates Right and Wrong; we require faculties which save us from the Near Right (which is Wrong). The author's simile of the expert batsman is apt and illustrative of his point. Poise, discrimination, detachment, are required to deal with the ever-changing problems of right karmic action.

We hope that this book will help to clear away many popular misconceptions of Theosophy and to prove that these are ill-founded and are not sup-

ported by the Mahatma teachings. The author has done his part, but the delicate and difficult work of regenerating and healing minds and psyches disturbed and bewildered by error rests finally upon the individual reader and his inner capacity to respond.

That a book containing criticisms of 'post-Blavatsky' Theosophy has been published by the Adyar Publishing House is an encouraging symptom; it is only a few years ago that the studying of *The Mahatma Letters* was discouraged in the Adyar Society. The book has been well received and the reviews have been quite favourable. We were delighted to read the review by Mr. Sydney Ransom, a part of which reads, "The book encourages us to think again over our theosophical teachings, to enquire of ourselves how far our so-called knowledge is a mass of misinformation picked up from all manner of sources, based upon inaccurate observation. How much have we trusted what we have been told? It is no easy task for the adult to revise his ideas . . . This little book must suggest to many readers what an illumination might await them, if they would read over again *The Mahatma Letters*, for therein are to be found some of the Eternal Truths of Life."

Our unbounded optimism in the ultimate acceptance of Theosophy rather than Neo-Theosophy leads us to hope that this book is a snow, flower, the precursor of spring in a new cycle for Theosophy.

D. W. B.

THE SLEEPING SPHERES

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longed to uplift the downtrodden, and they filed before me, rich in experience, glorious through endurance, helpers of their fellows, saviours of the race. I had desired knowledge, and the stars defiled before me, giving up their

secrets for the good of future races of men. I had pined, as the wayfarer in the desert pines for water, for the companionship of the true, the single-hearted, the unswerving companions of the order of Pain. And behold! these were within me and were my very selves, and together in a bond of unbroken sanctity we worked for millions yet unborn. Great Souls aided us. Great Spirits passed through us. Great Thoughts took form within us. We *Became*. And to us, so becoming, was revealed the great Vision. Man does not know it. Eye hath not seen it. Mind cannot name it. *It is*. The silver Spheres bowed themselves and trembled; they opened their azure veils and seemed to become one with the Unknowable as they dreamed the mystic Vision of the Grail sainted and holy, the Vision of Humanity redeemed and godlike, the dream of the many becoming The One.

I dare not say more. I cannot if I would. Yet oh! my comrades, know this. The highest realization of the Heaven-World is a dream of the *selfless selves*. We are nothing there. We have vanished. In that life at its best there is only the goal, the attainment of unity for those who suffered separation; the realization of peace for the whole of all the worlds. No one is near. No one is far. All are; all rest in the whole of nature, one, indivisible, and at peace. It matters not whether any one beloved soul travails upon earth or sleeps near at hand, a singing Sphere; to the Sphere-dreamer all are himself, at peace with himself.

Do you ask me, brothers, what of those who labour still upon the groaning earth? What of the cruel wrongs that still endure? I admit that we ignore them in that Heaven-World which is to us the realization of all that is ripe and fair. And so, although we have well-earned all that dream of peace, or whatever state of bliss becomes ours in the

Dream-Land, still I say that the Heaven-World is still a state of Self. Fair as its outward and inward seeming may be, it is but an assimilation of our highest dreams. It is the highest subjective snare of souls. The Self-Existent is not found within that well-earned state of rest.

While thus these thoughts endured, they gradually came to lose all form. You must remember that now my Consciousness was that of Thought only. In Thought I lived and moved and had my being. And for a time these thoughts were definite, were realizations of previous hopes and ideals. Let me illustrate for the sake of clearness. I had, while in objective earth-life, ties of perhaps unusual strength with a number of people, all of whom were working, in divers manners, towards a high and common ideal. On earth, we often differed, sometimes sharply; and yet the tie and the Ideal prevailed. At first, in the Heaven-World, I felt all my *special* comrades to be near me; those whom I best knew imparted, by their seeming nearness, a deep sweetness to my Thought. Presently I became *less* conscious of the identity of these friends with myself, and more conscious of that Ideal which we had shared. Thought of this Ideal expanded, until it grew greater than you can conceive, and this noble Ideal embraced all lands, all ages, all people, and all creatures, born and to be born.

As this beautiful Identity unfolded itself, Thought seemed to turn, with purity and harmony untold, towards every universal conception, in order to realize unity in all. Then all the worlds and beings became friends of my Thought. Then I knew, oh! my brothers, without discord, without separateness. Gone were those shapes of fear which hide us from one another. Gone the cruel masks which Life forces us to wear, the bodies which conceal us,

the barriers between soul and soul. I saw you as you are, you, Immortals, Inheritors and Rulers of a Kingdom not made with hands. Even our foes were our sterner selves only. We found Identity in difference, likeness in unlikeness; our souls looked upon one another, and with an ineffable impulse we united in The Ideal.

After this unspeakable moment the terms of consciousness changed. The universal laws began to be learned. The unattainable knowledge drew near. Thought was expressed in musical numbers; then in sounds full of a meaning never to be expressed to mortal ear; finally in colours, living, mystical, wonderful, every colour expressing a formless, spiritual Idea. And all this was myself, was yourselves, was one enraptured Ego. Yet I never lost the sense of individuality; the dewdrop was still distinct from the shining sea. So too, I knew each soul I loved, and when I came to love all souls and each was as my own Thought to me, still I had a distinct and separate consciousness of each. Yet all were One Thought.

Dreaming thus, Truth unfolding itself in flower-like hues, I seemed to sink deeper and yet deeper into a world of pure Ideation, formless, calm, but great with a power I cannot describe. A period of Thought-immersion passed. I do not know how first began that cause which brought my dream-existence to an end. I seemed first to feel vaguely, but with dismay, that all I knew was still the effect of a Cause that still escaped me. Nothing existed in and by itself. All I knew was the Tree of Life and of Being, of the objective and the subjective. Where was the Root? Where was the fountal well-spring of Being?

So soon as this idea moved into my mental vision I seemed to become something separate from the Thought. Thought and I were rent in twain. Instead of rest in an Ideal, I wanted the

Producer of the Ideal. The Self-Existent was wanting. Mind re-awoke and I observed my Thoughts and myself as two distinct entities, or as phases of one Ego. What was wanting to this Thought? Was I so sure that Thought was all? The Cause; the Cause; I clamoured for the Cause. And a profound Echo answered me: "Thou thyself art that Cause". I asked of that interior aerial Voice: "Where shall I find myself?" And the Voice answered: "Not in the Heaven-World. Not in the world of effects and rewards whither desire for results hath brought thee".

And then I saw the truth of this, and peace became odious to me. For it was a false peace, a mirage, a deception. In my consciousness dawned a tiny point of differentiation. Thought subdivided. I became, as it were, at war with myself. I wearied of inaction. I wanted to retrace my steps. Soul, the mighty, shook off its sloth, recognized that it was in a "No-Thoroughfare", and girded itself for a return to objective action, hoping in that to find the clue to the final Cause. Then Mind, the critic and divider, again stood forth. Time followed after, coming again into view. The sense of Time had been lost when unity prevailed. Separateness now awoke the consciousness of Time. From some unknown part of my being burning points seemed to spring out, stinging me to action. Thought of action drove away the uniform peace. Pictures of deeds and men once more streamed by—a long unending blazing river of Life. My mind seemed to leap into action. It remembered forgotten things, things left undone, experiences untasted. Rest was a weariness, peace was an insipidity to this burning warrior mind. True, a dim and distant part of myself seemed to look upon the restless Thinker in cold estrangement. My soul quivered, hesitated between the two aspects of itself,

hung poised, as it were, between sleep and action.

All at once, I knew not from whence, a torrent of sound swept over, the blare of the world stung my unaccustomed sense. From some gulf far away arose the tumult of Living. I realized that I had forgotten Life in dreams. With all the strength of my being I longed to reach Life again, to feel, to work, to act, to be.

A mad shudder swept Thought away. I became conscious of myself as a separate thing. I became conscious of the starry spaces, the Spheres, the Heaven-land. Out of the deeps of my being rose a cry, the cry for Life, for action. And the cry was answered. The Heaven-world disappeared. The starry spaces rolled together like a scroll. Down, down, in a red gulf, I saw the red world. Between that world and me rolled a phantasmagoria; the Life to come in all its turbulence passed, as it were, across a screen. I was that screen. I knew it all. Yet was I undeterred, undismayed. The Life-thirst was upon me. I must greedily drink the whole of Life again.

Over the gulf I leaned; I felt myself take form in one unforgettable throe. Discords shrilled through me. Clamour pervaded me. Mad forces warred and keen desires jarred me. The grandeur of action thrilled me. I could not pause. I must look again on Life. I must be my own, one separate Self again. A second throb, and I was born into my Sphere, a form in a world whence forms must fall. I gathered myself together. Over the red gulf I leaned. Its exhalations made my consciousness reel. Into that gulf I plunged, for I must live once more. Even as I fell, I felt a fierce keen joy, as of a conscious flame shooting into a sea of flames.

And then? Then a crash. Then Darkness. Then an end. There was only annihilation until I awoke. Where?

In the world of forms. Here, where form conceals the soul. Here, where I have lost my Heaven comrades. Here, where I find so few of you, my brothers! Here, where I put out groping hands and cannot touch you; eyes that are wistful and cannot see you for the tears. The heart calls, and hears no answer. Its call was too weak. Its faith was too small a thing. Where are you, oh my brothers? Let us not longer hide from one another. Let us look upon Life and one another as Souls set within one Universal, Eternal Soul. Then, perhaps, we shall see.

For, as in the Heaven-World the Heaven was our unity, so even here, all about us, a truer Heaven lies. If we will seek for identity and not for difference, we shall find the Heaven of fraternal Thought, and we shall find it, not in the place of dreams, but in this land where we stand, and to which we have come for one another, in order to meet one another, to experience and know one another. Each is here for each and for all. Why do we not remember our dependence upon one another? Each one of us is, as it were, an embrasure from which a different facet of Life is to be seen. Learning one another, we may learn the whole of Life, we may embrace the whole of Existence. From that whole and from it alone, the secret of the Unmanifested is to be gathered. For know this. Minds may differ; they differ as to formulae. Formulae are the forms of the Mind, the pictures cast upon the Screen of Life by various orders of minds. But hearts do not differ. The heart always ignores the differentiations of formulae, or forms, and relies upon the underlying unity, the identity of aim or of Nature. "One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin." In these feelings of a substratum of identity the highest secrets are locked up. In them is a key to a higher place than the Heaven-World,

the Svarga Land. That place is the Land of the Divine Darkness, the Causal Fountain. It is the home of the Self-Existent. It is where Non-Being, or the Ideal, has not yet gone forth into manifested Being.

Need I say more? I think not. You will have seen that the atoms of Desire inherent in the Sphere woke up from their latent, subjective condition and vibrated newly toward another Life, a birth into the manifested worlds again, for the subjective current had died away. The cycle of objectivity had re-awakened. Under the play of this new force the Life-atoms felt the breath of their lower fires and tended to the lower world. Desire of objective Life bred objective form, and form bred need of objective action, and by this path I returned from the Heaven-world. Yes; I returned, still seeking the Root of Being.

I awoke. I was lying in my bed. The winter wind blew over me. The house I had re-entered, that house I call my body, was stiff and stark. I awoke in the outer skies; I was drawn towards the chill body by a vital cord, as it were. The body was hideous. It was shrunken, emaciated, drawn. I loathed to enter such a dwelling. The sun was rising redly over the empurpled trees of the great wide park. I hesitated. I thought to take the path of the sun. I could not come in contact with that form like a shrivelled monkey. All at once, I saw the Messenger beside me. He touched my forehead. My eyes unclosed. I saw that this hideous parchment body lay across the knees of one who wept bitterly, who, weeping, upheld it to the rays of the rising sun, and called upon the Sun of Life, and called upon the hidden Sun of Souls, and wept bitterly.

"Wilt thou re-enter?" said the Messenger. "I will re-enter", I answered. "For what reason?" asked the Messenger. Fiercely I turned upon him. "To

quench one human tear, will I re-enter", cried I. The Messenger bowed his head, "Enter in the name of the Lords of the Law, and mayst thou be blessed in thy pilgrimage towards the hidden Sun", he whispered. He withdrew, and, shuddering, I re-entered that horrid form as one enters the darkness of the mother's womb. A shock, a shudder; and then I felt no more, I knew nothing.

I awoke. I was again conscious of the bodily environment. Like a heavy weight it surrounded me. My dulled ears heard a low sound. The sound grew a little louder. It was a curious sound; commingled gasps and sobs, with a note as of laughter. Someone was weeping for joy. Someone rejoiced to regain me. I looked down upon the comrade weeping with bended head. And I too wept in that cramped house, my body. I wept to feel that my Soul and I were twain. God—the One Life—had joined us together, and man, the human mind, desirous of new experience, had put us asunder.

My comrade wept for joy. I wept, but for sorrow. The comrade was glad to rejoin me. I was sad, for in the Heaven-World we had been wholly one; in the world of forms we must know some separation. Here we were twain. Here we were shut away from one another by bodily environment and differentiation of mind. In the Heaven-World I had leaned upon the twin-soul, I had become one with all souls amidst unnumbered glories; here must I vainly seek the beloved souls beneath the garb of form! Form, which hides us from one another! Mind, whose differences prevent our recognizing one another! How bitter the thought! I had tasted at least a higher form of union in the Heaven-World, and with that memory still freshly upon me, the highest form seemed but dull, gross earth.

So we wept together; one for joy, one for sorrow. He, because he had re-

gained me in the flesh. I, because I lost him in the flesh. Slowly we came to look, each upon the other's grief, and to understand each the other. Repentant, he cried: "I have dragged thee back to earth". Repentant, I moaned to him: "I would have cut thee off from experience and from duty, because I longed to roam the heavenly fields with thee". As each entered upon the feeling of the other, the heart of pity made us one again.

The Messenger stood before us. He spoke thus: "Do you not see that in Compassion and in duty done for duty's sake alone, lies the path to the Self-Existent? All else is Desire of Results and lands you in the World of Effects. The Sphere blossoms forth into objectivity and indraws into the root of subjectivity, but Permanence is only found when the human heart desires no results, but hungers for the Self-Existent Cause alone".

He vanished. We clung together, and the Truth came home to our minds. In the heart of Compassion only, in duty done for the sake of all, in pure Renunciation of result for self, thus alone can mankind escape the snare of the Heaven-World, the exalted dreams of an exalted Egoism; thus alone can the soul know itself, pure as the first dawn, strong as the Eternal; thus alone can mankind become the indivisible One Self, thus only can the sleeping Spheres become the universal Sphere, the Ring "Pass-Not"—the Manvantaric Goal, the Root, the Unity.

Jasper Niemand.

MAGIC

We believe in no Magic which transcends the scope and capacity of the human mind, nor in "miracles", whether divine or diabolical, if such imply a transgression of the laws of nature instituted from all eternity.

Isis. Unveiled I., xi.