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THE FIRST MONTH GOD

Janus, after whom January is named, is represented with two faces because he was acquainted with the past and the future. He presided over all gates and approaches, and his statues showed him holding a key in his right hand and a rod in his left. The gates of his temple were kept open in times of war and were shut in times of peace—but during a 700 year period of Roman history, the temple doors were closed only three times.

When the gate of the New Year opens, it is the custom to cast 'a backward glance o'er travel'd ways' and we are usually astonished to find how few of the multitudinous details of the year's journey remain with us. Certain important happenings may be fixed in memory—deep tragedies or joys are recalled, the tragic because it has been with us at the edge of consciousness all the time; the joys because they have been assimilated and will remain with us when tragedy and unhappiness have faded into the background.

In the process of looking backwards, we should not permit our consciousness to be flooded again with contrition for the mistakes and follies of the past year. If they occurred, then garner the experience gained thereby and move on, but do not re-agonize over those times when we were less than our normal selves. Mr. Wm. Q. Judge wrote, "The Past! What

of it? Nothing. Gone! dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. It only concerns you are you are now. In you as now you exist, lies *all* the past. So follow the Hindu maxim: 'Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge.' Regret is productive only of error. I care not what I *was*, or what anyone *was*. I only look for what I am each moment. For as each moment is and at once is not, it must follow that if we think of the past we forget the present, and while we forget, the moments fly by us, making more past. Then regret nothing, not even the greatest follies of your life, for they are gone, and you are to work in the present which is both past and future at once."

So having followed the custom of paying homage to Janus, the god of the month, let us recall that the Self in man is not an ephemeral being of a month, a year, a century or a millenium. Its incarnations are its days, and that which is garnered from the numberless incarnations, good, bad and indifferent, is the essence of experience, not the details. Each cycle brings its own opportunities, and we sincerely hope that this minor cycle of the coming year will be for all rich in occasions when the wisdom of the inner Self will guide our thoughts and actions.

A FELLOWSHIP OF FRIENDS OF TRUTH

BY HORACE ALEXANDER

There is today in India, but with members attached in many other parts of the world, a fellowship whose members include adherents of all the chief religious faiths of mankind. It is called the Fellowship of Friends of Truth. It came into being as a result, chiefly, of the close association of some members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) with Mahatma Gandhi, especially during the last few years of Gandhi's life. The actual founding of the fellowship did not take place till a year after Gandhi's death, but the idea of such a fellowship was discussed with him some months before he died.

It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves that India is above all other lands the land of religion. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism have all had their origins there, and both Christianity and Islam have taken root and flourished in Indian soil. Through the centuries, the religions of India have been tolerant towards one another. But in the past three centuries, India has known the intolerance of those, whether Muslim or Christian, who see their faith as the only true faith, and who think it is God's will that they should convert all men to the "only true faith". This has led to tragic religious conflict in recent decades, especially during the last years of British rule in India, when religion, so-called, poisoned the political life of the country.

Mahatma Gandhi spent much of his life fighting against this spirit of intolerance, especially as between Hinduism and Islam; but the forces of intolerance and of political bigotry were too great for him, and he had to live to see Hinduism itself affected by the contagion. Indeed, it was an embittered Hindu, one

who held that Gandhi was being too friendly to the Muslims, who assassinated him in January, 1948.

The connection of Gandhi with the Society of Friends was not life-long, although one of his first Christian friends, when he was a young man in South Africa, was a Quaker. But once the connection was established it grew rapidly. Gandhi, of course, was what in western terminology might be called a religious pacifist; that is to say, his convictions in the matter of non-violence, and his faith in the mighty power of Truth, or of soul-force, sprang from his conviction about the nature of God and the world. To Gandhi, God was truth; he identified the two completely. And to him, religion meant total self-sacrifice in the service of man; it did not mean creed or ritual. Prayer, yes indeed; but the prayer that any man can offer at any time in any place to the inner source of truth and love; not the kind of prayer that involves visits to temple or mosque or church, and the intermediary action of a priest or other professor of religion. So at many points Gandhi and the Quakers found unity. When Gandhi read the story of William Penn's "holy experiment" in Pennsylvania—the attempt of Quakers to build a modern State without armed defence—he was greatly impressed. Finally, London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends went on record in favour of Indian freedom at a time when most English people thought India was not ready for it; and when Gandhi came to London for the Round Table Conference in 1931, several of those who gave him most active support in England were Quakers. From that time to his death, the link was close, and tending to be closer.

A few months before his death, the present writer asked Mahatma Gandhi if he felt that the Society of Friends could do something to bind men and women of different faiths into fellowship together, especially in India. His reply was: "Yes". Two years later some of those who had worked with him and learnt from him in India felt that they could no longer shirk this challenge; and with the encouragement of fellow-members in both the United States and Great Britain (also, it must be added, in the face of some criticism) the fellowship was undertaken. From the start, its membership has in no sense been confined to Quakers or to followers of Gandhi. All who share its principles are welcome. It will be best here to quote the statement of basis, which has been slightly modified since the start in 1949, but remains fundamentally the same. It reads as follows:

"The Fellowship of Friends of Truth is alive to the urgent need in the world today of bringing together people of different faiths in a common endeavour to realize the good life for all through the way of truth and love. It attempts to do this on the basis:

(1) Of respect for all religions, implying thereby a frank acceptance of the fact of variety in man's growing apprehension of truth;

(2) of silent worship and

(3) of united brotherly action on non-violent lines.

"The Fellowship invites people of all faiths to share through the fellowship the richness of their various religious traditions and experiences in this adventure of the spirit.

"Those who join the Fellowship will be expected to support one another in the struggle for world peace and social justice, identifying themselves as closely as they are able with the oppressed and the disinherited, and treating all men

as brothers. Members of the Fellowship will also unite with other groups and individuals who are working for these ends".

The Fellowship keeps in touch through a small periodical, published in English, which is called the F.F.T. Quarterly. It is edited by S. K. George, a South Indian Christian, who was a close associate of Gandhi. Membership is still small, and the members are in many cases isolated, so that the hope of forming closely knit groups, who might regularly meet together in worship and in work has not yet materialized. Most members are probably from the intellectual classes, and so far not many of us have had the courage to live as poor men among the poor. Some, however, are certainly living lives of selfless service. Some of our Indian members are actively associated with Vinoba Bhavé's Land-Gifts Mission, or with other aspects of the social programs associated with the name of Gandhi. No attempt has been made to increase membership on a mass scale. It has been felt that we must not fall into the danger of creating another sect for the abolition of sects. The Fellowship exists largely as a gesture. In an age when, in religion as in other departments of life, there is great intolerance, when man is constantly being called upon to give blind loyalty to some narrow creed, we want to say to all the world: "That we believe, is no true loyalty to the teachings of Jesus Christ, or Muhammad or the Buddha or any other world teacher. We claim to be loyal to the faith in which we have been nurtured; but our interpretation of the teaching of our great founder leads us to believe that he calls us to reach out hands in fellowship to those who, in varying forms, are worshipping the same God of truth and love". Some years ago, I remember a simple Muslim taxi-driver in Pakistan saying to me, "We all worship the same

God; so why do we fight one another? Would it not be better if we accepted one another as brothers?" I have often wished that some of our sophisticated theologians could see the fundamental truth as simply as that man. No wonder Jesus thanked his heavenly father that he had revealed the truth to babes. We do well to seek, in these matters, to become simple like babes.

In these paragraphs I have freely used the expression, "God"; but that does not mean that our fellowship is only open to those who use the expression "God". There is nothing to exclude the sincere Buddhist or the sincere agnostic. I think we only exclude those who regard life as a purely physical ex-

perience on the one hand, and who reject the whole idea of a world of spirit; on the other hand I think our basis naturally excludes all those who claim that their system is the only possible way of salvation for man, and all those who put their trust in dogma and ritual and hierarchy. It welcomes all, whatever their label, who qualify under William Penn's definition of the godly man: "the meek, pious, just and merciful ones". Nor do we claim to be the only fellowship that can link men together across the barriers that too often divide them. It is but one fellowship, ready at all times to find means of working together with others who have reached the same place along a different path.

BUDDHISM AND THEOSOPHISTS

BY ALEX WAYMAN

Buddhism is today experiencing a remarkable revival, coinciding, some say, with the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvana, placed by Singhalese reckoning in the neighbourhood of 1956-1957 A.D. It is, however, less widely known that the year designated is also an anniversary of Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419 A.D.), who founded the reform school of Tibetan Buddhism usually called the Gelugpa. Moreover, this effort falls within the 60-year cycle 1927-1986 A.D., calculating by the "Wheel of Time" (*kalacakra*).

The unsympathetic observer might say that world councils, as have recently taken place, in Japan, Burma, etc., and the erection of fine buildings, such as the one in Toronto by the Shin Buddhists, do not themselves bear out the claims of "revival". It is true that Spirit does not always descend into human constructions but also true that

a pleasing, strong physical body is the preferable tabernacle for the Spirit.

Indeed these public facts are backed up by much unheralded progress. Few people are aware of the immense work done by scholars of many lands in the editing and translating of Buddhist manuscripts. These efforts have usually appeared in journals and serial publications of limited distribution. Roughly speaking, in the 60-year period of 1867-1926 the "foundation" was laid, and in the present 60-year cycle the "building" of translation is being erected. Thus, at the present rate, anybody born, for example, in 1956 or 1957, mid-years of the 60-year cycle, will, if so minded, find texts for reliable instruction that are hardly imagined by the present generation. Now there is a relatively small, but well-trained, body of translators engaged in rendering difficult works of Buddhist thought into European lan-

guages, including English. The preparation for such labour is tremendous; many can profit, but few will realize how difficult it is to translate just what is in the original, no more, no less, in a faithful, but not awkward manner.

Early in 1955, the Government of Ceylon appropriated a large sum for an English encyclopedia of Buddhism, which will be approximately 15,000 pages. Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, the Editor-in-Chief of the projected Encyclopedia, has toured all nations having Buddhist scholars and has enlisted the support of leading specialists to be editors of main subject headings. In Japan alone, a committee of thirty leading scholars will handle the sections dealing with the history, doctrine, and practice of Japanese Buddhism.

Those who like to delve into the underlying factors in such developments, who would seek to appraise this remarkable move on the part of a country which does not have the extensive financial means of some Western nations, could turn back the pages of history. Dr. Malalasekera gave a radio talk on Col. Olcott, and an associated article is reprinted in the Feb.-March 1955 issue of *World Buddhism* (published Peradeniya, Ceylon). We read, "On May 15th, 1880, before he got off the ship he made this entry in his diary: 'New and great responsibilities are to be faced; momentous issues hang on the result of this visit'." The acting editor of *World Buddhism* introduces Dr. Malalasekera's article by saying, "February the 17th is celebrated as Olcott Day in many parts of the world, but nowhere are the celebrations more elaborate or more sincere than in Ceylon where, year after year, his name is recalled in reverent gratitude. In every Buddhist school in the island, speeches are made recounting his services to Buddhism at a time when the religion was at a very low ebb in the country."

It is common knowledge that Col. H. S. Olcott was the President-Founder of the Theosophical Society, founded also by H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge, in 1875. Readers of the *Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* will be aware of the esteem in which Col. Olcott was held. Whatever may have been his faults, his services of great magnitude are unassailable, and he, at least, *did* know the Masters.

The Voice of the Silence, by H. P. Blavatsky, was predominantly Buddhistic, and her *Secret Doctrine* treated the Buddha with the utmost reverence. Adding to these considerations the general Buddhistic tone of the *Mahatma Letters*, and it becomes clear that the Founders of the Theosophical Society oriented it in a direction favourable to, in order that it might be parallel with, the revival of World Buddhism that destiny held in store.

After the death of H.P.B. in 1891, Mrs. Annie Besant published a mutilated edition of *The Voice of the Silence*, from which the Pratyeka-Buddha statement had been removed. She claimed that H.P.B. had charged her to remove an erroneous passage copied in a careless moment. However, H.P.B. had correctly presented a fundamental tenet of Mahayana Buddhism when she wrote, "In Northern Buddhism a 'Pratyeka Buddha' is a synonym of spiritual Selfishness." It is a matter for congratulation that in recent years the Theosophical Society re-published *The Voice of the Silence* in its original form.

In 1924 an English Theosophist named Christmas Humphreys, then a young man, was forming a Buddhist Centre in the Theosophical Society. As he wrote in his work, *Buddhism*, a Pelican Book (p. 225), "On the 19th November, 1924, the Centre became a Lodge, the Charter being handed to me by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa, himself a distinguished Singhalese Buddhist and now President

of the Theosophical Society. Thus was born the Buddhist Lodge, which in 1943 became the Buddhist Society, London, with affiliated organizations and correspondents in most corners of the world. In the autumn of 1949, it celebrated its silver jubilee."

Undoubtedly, the formation of a "Centre" by Mr. Humphreys was of great importance in the "world of causes"; yet it must be conceded that Buddhism is abstruse and that Theosophists, despite the natural advantage in having been indoctrinated with karma and reincarnation, can be woefully wrong in their judgments of Buddhist positions. As said in the S.D. (I, 17): "The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and incarnations."

Take, for example, the much-discussed De-va-chan, a Tibetan expression that translates the Sanskrit Sukhavati 'the blissful place'. The *Mahatma Letters* (pp. 99-100) says that this land is "allegorically described by our Lord Buddha himself. . . 'Many thousand myriads of systems of worlds beyond this (ours) there is a region of Bliss called *Sukhavati*. . .'" Such descriptions as continue in the passage are found especially in the scriptures of the Pure Land school of China which developed into the Shin school of Japan. Now, do Theosophists understand those *allegorical* descriptions better than do the Buddhists? Do Theosophists have any intuition superior to the Buddhists? The *Mahatma Letters* (p. 64) says: "The recognition of the higher phases of man's being on this planet is not to be attained by mere acquirement of knowledge. Volumes of the most perfectly constructed information cannot reveal to man life in the higher regions. One has to get a knowledge of spiritual facts

by personal experience and from actual observation, for as Tyndall puts it 'facts looked directly at are vital, when they pass into words half the sap is taken out of them'." Indeed, the scriptures about Sukhavati were meditative manuals, practical instructions for the *yogi*. It is true that most Buddhists would not care to undergo the intense discipline of man's whole nature that is necessary to elevate consciousness to that sublime level, but to be fair in this matter, let us face the fact that very few Theosophists would care to undergo it either. It remains for the extreme few to state what is the *allegorical* meaning of Buddhist scriptures. In the meantime, it might be suggested that those Theosophists who are so magnanimous as to desire to relieve Buddhists of the "dead-letter", take serious stock of themselves and determine whether or not the profound intuition professed is not in reality a plentiful supply of conceit.

In the case of the abstruse metaphysical terms of Buddhism, we might take as an example the Bodies of the Buddha, Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya. If any Theosophist is genuinely interested in obtaining the most authentic information on these subjects he should go to the Buddhist scriptures which treat of the subject, and the celebrated commentaries on them by the Masters in the Buddhist lineage. Those works will give the interested person the utmost that can be gained from words. If he is still not satisfied, then let him live the life, train his faculties and see for himself.

In the year 1927, the first of our present 60-year cycle, there appeared *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, after the English rendering of Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub. The following year saw the publication of the second of the series, called *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*. Later, the third,

Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, appeared. Finally, in 1954, the fourth, and presumably last, of the series, *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*, was published. Thus, while many have repeated the Second Object of the Society, "The Comparative Study. . .", and have praised it, there is scarcely anyone after H. P. Blavatsky who more fulfilled it than did Evans-Wentz. What is more, he comes as practically the last of a clan which included H.P.B. herself—"The Travellers". Consider her article, "The Search After Occultism," reprinted in *A Modern Panarion*, where she wrote, "One single journey to the Orient, made in the proper spirit, . . ." Nowadays it is not so much the bandits and savage animals that one must look out for: one may be strangled in the "red tape" or turned away by the border guards of the "civilized countries" which are as difficult to enter as "Forbidden Tibet" of yore. But it is not necessary to journey that way any more. Today one need not go to India to study the Vedas, to Japan to learn Japanese, or to Tibet to read Tibetan scriptures. The "impenetrable mountain fastnesses" are no longer so impenetrable, and with this development there naturally arose a *redisposition* and *redistribution*. Since 1927 we need not speak of the headquarters of the Theosophical Society any more than we need single out any country as *the* place to go.

Those works of Evans-Wentz should be understood as pioneer. While seemingly not of equal value, it is not an easy matter to evaluate them. One criterion that a reader can employ is to consider whether, apart from directions to do this and that, there are statements regarding the qualifications of the candidates or disciples who are to do the practices mentioned. On the other hand, the reasons advanced in criticism by contributors to the *Canadian Theosophist* were uniformly unsound. Dr.

Evans-Wentz replied in a sound manner in his article, "Right Views versus Wrong Views: A confutative critique of The Tibetan Book of the Dead," C.T., Dec. 1942. Probably the most pressing objection in the minds of many was the sex symbolism of the Tantras. These same persons would not, I feel, have so interpreted the line in the Stanzas of Dzyan, "Darkness alone was Father-Mother, Svabhavat; and Svabhavat was in darkness." Our culture allows for a symbolic interpretation of the expression Father-Mother; while Tibetan culture allows for a symbolic interpretation of the picture Father-Mother. If we do not allow that pictures are productive of higher-order abstractions, this implies that the Egyptians had no abstract thought, for their language was pictorial. Consequently, those who criticized on this ground had not entered the spirit of the *Secret Doctrine*, which was meant to prepare the Western mind for seeing the fundamental ideas that lie behind the presented forms of the great World Religions. Yet, it must be admitted that the reform of Tsong-kha-pa brings forth views on many matters that differ from what is exposed in the works brought us by Evans-Wentz. Let us hope, then, that this reform is brought to the West; and, even so, Theosophists should appreciate the outstanding manner in which Dr. Evans-Wentz has accomplished what the Second Object proposed.

One of the contributors to *The Canadian Theosophist* in the early years of our present sixty-year cycle was James Morgan Pryse. And it might be asked, why criticize him now when he is no more able to reply than could H.P.B. to her posthumous critics, including him? The reason is that certain of his viewpoints are just as important to consider today as when he wrote them. Take, for example, his remark in the August 1928 issue about a word in the Voice,

"In Mr. Judge's edition the impossible 'Upadya' is changed to 'Upadhyaya,' which means 'sub-teacher,' and is therefore inconsistent with the context." Granted that "Upadhyaya" can mean "sub-teacher" in some contexts; but does this imply that in the given context in the Voice it meant that? Not at all; for in the Buddhist works, the word means exactly what the note in the Voice sets forth; and the word "Mahopadhyaya" or "Great Upadhyaya" was reserved for only the most celebrated of the Buddhist teachers, such as Nagarjuna and Asanga.

Recently Professor Edwin A. Burtt, who long ago attained great eminence and philosophical distinction by his work, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science*, published in the Mentor Religious Classic series, the book, *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*. Thus we see that the powerful appeal of Buddhism in the modern world lies in this stress on Compassion, which is precisely what aroused the jeers of Pryse in "The Study of 'The Voice of the Silence'," C.T., July 1928. Yet his article is a valuable record of attitudes. For example, he wrote (p. 135), "Yet in this Fragment nothing is accorded the candidates except teachings, some of them baseless, borrowed from exoteric and decadent Buddhism." His point is well taken: the Buddhists do not have the Buddhist teachings; the view of Pryse is shared by many persons today and therefore must be discussed.

Why the contempt for the exoteric here demonstrated? This was not peculiar to Pryse. Otherwise, how explain the appeal of esoteric sections? If the Way is secret, do these people want to know it in order to *practise* it; or was it, as usual, an appeal to one of the basest of human failings—the desire of owning something, because others do not have it; the hope that others do not have the truth so that oneself alone may

have it, or that others do not have a faculty in order that oneself may be superior? *Ecce homo!* But what is serviceable and profitable to mankind is exoteric. For example, the sun is exoteric. It shines on all alike. No Brahmans, no Shudras, as far as the sun is concerned! And it is the sun that is good, the promoter of life and of welfare. Furthermore, if there is an esoteric side to the sun, that side never came to be an exclusive possession of any esoteric section on earth!

Therefore, the difference between Buddhism and Hinduism must be made clear. The Buddha was a Revealer: He taught the Path to Illumination. He made it exoteric, while it remained esoteric, and now largely lost, in Hinduism. The Path is given in all completeness in the Pali, Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan languages. Theosophy, as brought by H.P.B., never presented more than bare fragments of the exoteric or esoteric Path, because Theosophy had the object of showing the essential ideas behind all Religions and Philosophies to promote the understanding and world co-operation so sorely needed today, and was never meant to be a clear manual of rules for training. What is that exoteric Buddhism? It teaches three abodes (*vihara*), that of the Aryas, that of the Devas, and that of Brahma.

The abode of the Aryas is called the Four Noble Truths:

"Suffering is a Noble Truth; it is to be experienced."

"The cause of Suffering is a Noble Truth; it is to be eliminated."

"The Cessation of the Cause is a Noble Truth; it is to be done with the Eye."

"The Path to that Cessation is a Noble Truth; it is to be intensely contemplated."

Furthermore, that Path in both Northern and Southern Buddhism is in three stages, called: The Instruction of

Higher Morality, The Instruction of Higher Mind, and the Instruction of Higher Insight.

The abode of the Devas is the "Realm of Form" in four main levels, and sometimes their abode is said to include the "Formless Realm." These levels of the "Realm of Form" are often called the four Dhyana Heavens. The *Mahatma Letters* (p. 105) quotes the Jñāna Prasthāna, a great Buddhist work of the Abhidharma class, extant only in Chinese: "by personal purity and earnest meditation, we overleap the limits of the World of Desire, and enter in the World of Forms."

The abode of Brahma is called the Four Boundless States. They are Boundless Love (*maitri*), Boundless Compassion (*karuna*), Boundless Joy (*mudita*), and Boundless Equilibrium (*upeksha*).

Finally, Buddhism teaches three successive passageways to Spiritual Freedom. The first passageway is called Voidness (*shunyata*). This is to make one aware of the soullessness of personality and the soullessness of the natures of things as presented to the senses. The next passageway is called imagelessness (*animitta*). This is to allay the adherence to the reality of those two kinds of soullessness. The last passageway is called Unobligation (*apranihita*). This is to completely extirpate that adherence.

All the thousands of Buddhist scriptures, whether of the Northern or Southern schools, are given over to illustrating and expanding the points above mentioned. That is the exoteric Buddhism, which so many Theosophists have glibly dismissed while pledging themselves to false teachers who manufactured "esoteric" books—tongue in cheek!

But then what is the esoteric doctrine of Buddhism that is mentioned by H. P. Blavatsky in her article "The Theosophi-

cal Society: Its Mission and its Future?" The Secret Doctrine (I, xx) tells us, "The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions." Thus, while exoteric Hinduism and exoteric Buddhism disputed with each other for centuries, their esoteric content was consistent. The Vedic Rishi was not the composer of a hymn or a believer, but the seer of an eternal truth. And Esoteric Buddhism is just that way: the vision of exoteric Buddhism, not in its usual form of one thing after another, but in its extraordinary form of "all together" or "*simultaneously*."

IMMORTALITY

This is a question of the greatest magnitude, for what could be more inclusive than immortality? We believe that life is eternal, but most of us are unable to retain unbroken consciousness between one day and the next, to say nothing of our succeeding incarnations. Each day we die in sleep, and at the end of each earthly life, death is 'a sleep and a forgetting'.

Immortality is discussed in most books of philosophy having a Theosophical content. In *The Mahatma Letters* (p. 129), the Master K.H. speaks of "The one *Life* in its universal collectivity and entire or Absolute Abstraction; that which has neither beginning nor end, nor any break in its continuity . . . Immortal then is he. . . whose distinct consciousness and perception of *Self under whatever form*—undergoes no disjunction at any time," which seems to indicate an unbroken circle including everything from the lowest to the highest. A study of the doctrine of reincarnation should open the mind and develop the intuition to a deeper understanding of immortality, as the one is inevitably bound up with the other.

It would appear then, that one task

confronting us here on earth is to try to bridge the gap between our sleeping and our waking consciousness, to obtain, in short, a complete recollection of all our lives in the physical body, and in so doing, come to see and understand the meaning of all our experiences, our struggles, mistakes, misunderstandings and seeming injustices; to see the ultimate aim and the glorious end. We must identify ourselves with good and diligently seek out our own salvation.

This may be what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7.) H.P.B. wrote in *Isis Unveiled* " 'God's son' is the immortal spirit assigned to every human being. It is this divine entity which is the 'only man', for the casket which contains our soul, and the soul itself, are but half-entities, and without its overshadowing both body and astral soul, the two are but an animal *duad*. It requires a trinity to form the complete 'man', and allow him to remain immortal at every 're-birth', or *revolutio*, throughout the subsequent and ascending spheres, every one of which brings him nearer to the refulgent realm of eternal and *absolute* light. (Vol. 2, p. 195).

J. H. McMurray.

"The human Monads or Egos. . . are gradually formed and strengthened during their incarnation-cycle by constant additions of individuality from the personalities in which incarnates that androgynous, half-spiritual, half-terrestrial principle, partaking of both heaven and earth, called by the Vedantins Jiva . . . and by the Occultists the Manas (Mind); that, in short, which uniting itself partially with the Monad, incarnates in each new birth. In perfect unity with its (seventh) Principle; the Spirit unalloyed, it is the divine Higher Self."

S.D. III., 58.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I missed the boat as the saying is when the last issue was in press, and the usual greetings for Christmas and the New Year did not appear. Somehow our bi-monthly publication puts the times out of joint and it was overlooked. However better late than never, so I trust everybody had an enjoyable time and made merry round ye olde yule log with its attendant good cheer. Now that the New Year has come and the usual good resolutions have been made and we are all set for another period of endeavour, I send my best wishes to all with the earnest hope that 1956 will bring many blessings with Peace, Prosperity and Goodwill to all mankind.

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I have much pleasure in welcoming the following new members into the Society: Mrs. Gladys H. Carlaw, Toronto Lodge; Mr. John Knowles, Mr. Pierre Barbey, Mrs. Marguerite Barbey, Dr. Elizabeth du Toit, all of Montreal Lodge; Miss Stella Ballard, Hamilton Lodge.

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Theosophically I think we can look back on 1955 with a certain feeling of gratification in that it has been fruitful numerically, materially and spiritually in bringing the light as we see it to many hearts who are earnestly seeking the Truth. To me there is no question that my visit and that of my colleague, the Editor, to our western lodges has been an incentive to increased vitality and effort on behalf of the Movement in Canada. Hence it was with a feeling of real pleasure that I made my Annual Report to Adyar for the closing year. To me there is a movement, "a stirring in the glen" in the words of that thrilling Highland song, that betokens events about to happen, for unquestionably an acceleration in things Theosophical as

well as in world affairs is working up to some climax, probably as foretold in our writings, the advent of the next Teacher.

* * * *

Many of our members are actively engaged in work in connection with the prevention of cruelty to animals and in vegetarianism and I am happy to report any high lights in regard to such activities. Sent to me is a report of the Christmas Dinner held by the Vegetarian Society which was held in Toronto recently. There were over fifty persons present including Professor and Mrs. Ernest Wood. The President, Mrs. Jackson remarked after the banquet that it was a remarkable fact that no life had been taken to provide such a wonderful meal. Professor Wood in his remarks as speaker of the evening told how he had become a vegetarian when very young after reading an extract from *The Light of Asia*. I also recently received from Miss Ruth E. Playle, a member of Toronto Lodge, a copy of her report on the International Vegetarian Union Convention held at Paris last summer, at which Miss Playle was present as a delegate from the Canadian Vegetarian Union. About 300 delegates attended, British, French and German delegates forming the majority, but other European countries were represented as well as other lands, India being represented by two members. The meetings were held in the International House of the Cité Universitaire on the outskirts of Paris and Miss Playle spoke highly of the arrangements made for carrying on the meetings, especially the facilities provided for rapid translation of the speeches. A memorable event was an officail reception at the Hotel de Ville, Paris. Plans have already been made for a Convention in Bombay in 1957 and in Germany in 1958. Miss Playle suggested that possibly the vege-

tarians of Canada could later act as hosts to an international convention to be held in one of the beautiful natural parks of Canada.

* * * *

It is with sincere sympathy for those afflicted that I learned of the tragic disappearance and presumed death of the brother of Mrs. Sarah Lakin, Treasurer of the Hamilton Lodge. It appears that Mr. Omerod went fishing with a friend over a week-end and nothing has been found of either, only the upturned boat as mute evidence of the tragedy. Condolences are hereby expressed for the members of both families who saw the old year close in such sorrow.

* * * *

In various countries there is a distinct movement among Young Theosophists to be up and doing. During the past year I have received many notifications of this and two stand out prominently. One comes from the Brazilian Section where they are organizing the First Brazilian Congress to meet at Sao Paulo on January 21-28. They send greetings to Canada with the hope that some of our young members will attend, and include an invitation to accommodate them in their city at their own expense—a generous offer for which I express gratitude. Personally I wish Sao Paulo was not so far away, otherwise some of our young people would gladly have accepted the wonderful invitation. Then again, the French Section is very active and enthusiastic and the Young Theosophists have gone to the extent of having a publication of their own *Enthousiasme* which is contributing to the good work. I would be glad to send a copy of this magazine to anyone who reads French and would like a copy, or they could write direct to Jean Claude Garric, 9bis Rue du Cot Pilot, Neuilly/Seine; France.

E. L. T.

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"Thane Howe",
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The Editor,
The Canadian Theosophist.

Dear Sir,

You will no doubt be surprised to receive this letter from a complete stranger, although I have been a regular reader of your magazine for some years, thanks to the library of the Corresponding Fellows Lodge in England. I have been contemplating a letter to you for some days; firstly concerning the article

by Cecil Williams in the October number of your magazine and secondly with a request for assistance from any of your readers.

Cecil Williams has stated that by the year 1902 "Rutherford and Soddy had proved conclusively that the atom was divisible, that one element could artificially be transmuted into another, for, by the first bombardment of the atomic nucleus in history, from uranium they made radium. . ." It should be emphasized however, that the discoveries prior to 1902, established "the fundamental principles of the theory of radioactivity" understood as a completely natural and spontaneous phenomenon, quite uncontrollable by man. Radium is not produced by the bombardment of the uranium nucleus—it originates from the perfectly spontaneous disintegration of the uranium nucleus. The radium is one of a series of radio-active elements produced by successive disintegrations of the original uranium nucleus, the series ending in the non-active element, lead. Each disintegration is accompanied by the emission of energetic radiation designated as *a*, *b*, or *g* radiation. These ideas are summed up by Soddy himself, "Rutherford and his radio-active emanations and active deposits got me before many weeks had elapsed and I abandoned all to follow him. For more than two years scientific life became hectic to a degree rare in the lifetime of an individual, rare perhaps in the lifetime of an institution. The discovery that the emanations were argon gases followed by that of thorium-x as an intermediate product between thorium and the emanation it produces, led rapidly to the complete interpretation of radioactivity as a natural process of spontaneous atomic disintegration." It should be noted that thorium closely follows uranium in its radioactive behaviour and that the emanations are not to be confused with the radiations.

The first artificially induced transmutation of one element into another was observed some years later (1919) when Rutherford was no longer at McGill University. Nevertheless his esteem and the significance of his work at McGill were fully appreciated at the time of his departure, as witness the following resolution of the Faculty of Applied Science at McGill, "In the course of nine years crowded with epoch-making researches, Professor Rutherford has permanently associated the MacDonal Physics Laboratory with discoveries of such significance that their ultimate effect on the conception of the physical universe cannot yet be foretold; he has thereby extended the fame of McGill University to all parts of the world, and has attracted to her laboratories distinguished men from Europe and the United States." Both my quotations are from Dr. Eve's life of Rutherford. I would also suggest, regarding H.P.B.'s prediction for the year 1897, the addition of Professor J. J. Thomson's announcement in 1897 of the nature of the Crookes' cathode rays, i.e., the atomic character of electricity (the electron). This aspect is discussed in my article appearing in *The Theosophical Forum* Jan. 1950 Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, "The Theory of Atomic Energy."

The association of world leaders in science, art, philosophy and public affairs, with the Theosophical Society in its early days, also remarked upon by Mr. Williams, is, I am sure, a fascinating story, which I am confident holds a key to the future role of Theosophy. I have been contemplating for some time an investigation into the life and works of Sir William Crookes, with particular reference to his occult and psychic researches and to his associations with the Masters, H.P.B. and the Society in its early days. I am particularly anxious to trace any records of correspondence, lectures and articles relat-

ing to this subject and would be very grateful to any of your members and readers who can advise me of such material not readily accessible in the standard Theosophical publications, such as *The Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Mahatma Letters*. I am confident that the work and importance of H.P.B. will be steadily enhanced by an investigation of these early associations and an accurate interpretation in the light of present-day scientific advances.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. Lucas.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Diamond Sutra or The Jewel of Transcendental Wisdom. Translated from the Chinese by A. F. Price with a Foreword by Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz. The Buddhist Society, 16 Gordon Sq., London, W.C.1, 1955. 80 pp. Boards, 5s. 4d.

This is a revised reprint of the edition first published in 1947. Although this sutra forms so small a part of the great Prajna-Paramita literature of Mahayana Buddhism, its importance lies in its being an epitome of the whole. "It is, therefore, extremely profound and extremely subtle," says Mr. Price. The many necessary commentary notes are intended to show that this scripture is not, however, too abstruse to repay close study. It is presented in the form of a dialogue between the Lord Buddha and the disciple Subhuti on how to discipline thought.

In the Foreword, Dr. Evans-Wentz says, "Salvation is not, contrary to what the multitude are taught to believe, purchaseable by good works. It is not the giving away in charity of worldly treasures, however inconceivably great, that matters, but the practising and dissem-

ination of the Buddha Dharma. . . Men forget that the chief purpose of being incarnate is not to exploit and conquer external nature but to conquer the self, to evolve beyond the commonly-held concept of an individualized personality, to transcend appearances, to realize the untenability and delusiveness of the doctrine of ego, or soul. . . Herein, then, have I been privileged to suggest to all to whom this precious Jewel of Transcendental Wisdom may come, the need of putting its teachings to the test of practice, and, as they do so, to treasure continually whilst incarnate here on earth the admonition of the Sages:

Time is fleeting, learning is vast;
No one knoweth the duration of
one's life:
Therefore use the swan's art of ex-
tracting milk from water,
And devote thyself to the Most
Precious Path."

In Section XIII, this instruction is succinctly stated by the Buddha: "Subhuti, if on the one hand a good man or a good woman sacrifices as many lives as the sand-grains of the Ganges, and on the other hand anyone receives and retains even only four lines of this Discourse, and teaches and explains them to others, the merit of the latter will be the greater." . . . Now in what manner may he explain them to others? By detachment from appearances—abiding in Real Truth. So I tell you—

Thus shall ye think of all this fleeting world:

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

The Alphabet and the Ancient Calendar, by Hugh A. Moran, published by Pacific Books, Palo Alto, Calif., \$3.50.

The author studied at Oxford under such noted Orientalists as Sayce, Stenning, Flinders Petrie and others, afterwards going to the far East to take up the study of Chinese. Being thus well prepared, Dr. Moran has brought to bear on the problems of the alphabet a many-sided approach and has developed a theory of origins which should be of interest to readers of this magazine. He sets forth, and argues well for, the thesis that the alphabet arose out of the astrological or calendar signs common to the philosophies of all great peoples of antiquity, but preserved intact only in the Chinese ideographic system.

The author begins by reviewing certain of the theories now current as to the origin of the alphabet. He refers to the ancient tradition that the Phoenicians learned the art of phonetic writing in Egypt and so brought it to Greece, being mariners. He agrees that this tradition, as far as it goes, may be approximately correct, but raises the question as to where the Egyptians themselves received their writing. Ingo W. D. Hackh, another writer on the subject, holds to the thesis that the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt are the parents of all our modern alphabets and this is not necessarily inconsistent with the work of Moran. But Hackh accepts the theory of the Atlantean origin and believes that the Mayan hieroglyphs and those of Egypt betray such striking similarities that a common origin must be postulated.

According to Dr. Moran, Chinese culture is important in probing the origins of the alphabet because it is the only ancient civilization which has come down to us with an unbroken history. Throughout the whole period, astrology has played a major part. Some of the most treasured volumes in the earliest literature deal with it, and astrological signs and symbols are woven into the

very fabric of the Chinese system of writing. The Chinese language depends on such symbols and without them it could not be written; with them "it is capable of expressing the most abstruse philosophy." Dr. Moran goes on to consider each primitive character by itself in terms primarily of the Greek and Hebrew alphabets, as compared with the Chinese 'Luna' and Solar charac-

ters, principally the former, since alphabets are supposed by him to stem from the days of the lunar month.

Space will not permit any detailed analysis of Dr. Moran's interesting findings; these should be read and examined carefully. One can only hope that his efforts may stimulate other studies of the subjects he touches upon.

W. F. Sutherland.

EXPANSION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

BY OLIVE HARCOURT

In all the teachings of religion and philosophy one finds the injunction to enter into the silence, or, in other words, to meditate, the object of which is to gain expansion of consciousness.

What do we mean by the term expansion of consciousness? Actually, every new idea contacted for the first time, every increase of knowledge is an expansion of consciousness. But in entering into the silence there are two special kinds of expansion sought by both the mystic and the occultist, namely, development of supernormal sense power with a view to obtaining glimpses of the higher planes and that exalted form called cosmic consciousness or intuitional wisdom.

Man possesses his senses in duplicate—a second set, mind or soul senses—capable of receiving impressions recorded in the astral light, and of passing them on to the outer senses by a method of which we know nothing at all.

The sense of sight is peculiar in that it can be turned on and off at will and the corresponding supernormal sense be substituted for it. We can see with eyes either shut or open. Synesius said:—

"Those who have been initiated into the Mysteries know that the pair of eyes which are below should be closed when the pair of eyes which are above

are open, and when the pair of eyes which are above are closed then those which are below should be open." Which is only another way of saying that we ought to be able to turn on both the normal and supernormal sense at will. It is, therefore, the most useful of the senses for research into higher planes.

The question is often asked "what is the difference between objective and subjective clairvoyance?"

Objective clairvoyance, that is, seeing into another plane of being with open eyes, is an extension of normal sight, the more or less voluntary ability to become aware of immaterial objects just beyond the range of everyday powers of vision, of things consisting of matter more tenuous than that of our earth. Subjective clairvoyance, that is vision with closed eyes in meditation, is not cognizant of matter at all.

Objective clairvoyance is of three kinds—the seeing of discarnate spirits, of astral projections of persons absent at the time of the vision, and of the human aura. People who possess one or more of these faculties have the power of seeing a little more and a little more clearly than the rest of their fellows, and the same applies to those who have the clairaudient power. The remaining

senses function in the same way, touches on the body are felt by some who are sensitive, sweet odours are perceived by others, even taste can be astrally present, though it is rare.

All around us, impinging upon our bodies, penetrating its countless cells, playing upon its nerves, influencing its brain matter, changing the form and colour of our higher bodies, are millions of vibrations of which our outer senses are unaware. An excellent illustration of this was once put forward by a writer on these recondite subjects:—

“Imagine a piano of forty-nine octaves in length at which a musician is seated. He is not able to use more than two and a half octaves of the instrument, all the rest is unplayable by him, he does not even know that the remaining forty-six and a half octaves are there at all. The piano represents Nature, the musician humanity.”

We are all musicians seated at the piano which is Nature, contacting only a few of her mighty forces. Outside that limited area all is for us untastable, unsmellable, inaudible, intangible, invisible. But to those who have learned to play a note or two more of the cosmic instrument the veil between this world and the next has grown a little thin, letting in a glimmer of light, and for one who has succeeded in sufficiently training his inner senses, the veil can at times almost disappear, leaving the impressions received steady and clear.

The objective clairvoyance of the spiritualistic mediums is capable of marked development, not so their subjective powers of sight. The best trained professional mediums are wonderfully correct in their descriptions of people both dead and alive, but they rarely attain to conspicuous powers in subjective vision. Sceptics ascribe their ability to contact discarnate spirits to telepathy, a view hardly tenable when one remembers the difficulty experienced in attempting to

influence the mind of another person by thought-transference, experiments along this line showing that mind-reading requires much time and great concentration. It is very unlikely that a medium, no matter how highly gifted, would be sensitive enough to pour out in a few short minutes rapid descriptions of people, deceased or living, of whom he knows nothing, not to mention events in their lives and the manner of their passing.

It is possible that there is a link between mediums and the elements. Everything in the universe being composed of the four elements and combinations of them, and each element existing on every plane of being, mounting higher and higher until it reaches the God-head itself, a medium may be under the sway of a particular element on a plane a little above that of dense matter, a plane whose vibrations set up a corresponding set of vibrations in the subtle body of the medium. A materialization medium, or one who brings about table-turning, or other material forms of phenomena may be under the influence of the element of earth, the clairaudient under that of air, the sound-carrying element, the clairvoyant under that of water, the element specially referred to the sense of sight because it possesses the power of reflecting. And so on, including the combinations of several elements with each other.

Another form of objective clairvoyance is the seeing of astral projections, or phantasms of the living. Voluntary astral projections are extremely dangerous experiments, but uninduced they are natural and unavoidable, coming uninvited as they list. A person thinking earnestly of a place or a friend is sending his astral body out on its travels, and that subtle body can be seen by one who has the gift of inner sight. Such a projection is often sent by the dying, or is deliberately carried out for a

special purpose, and when performed by an adept is highly effective. A fully attested and consciously carried out projection is told of St. Anthony. In the year 1228 he was preaching in a Church at Limoges in Belgium, when he suddenly remembered he had an engagement to take part in a service to be held in the Chapel of the monastery to which he belonged. Kneeling down in the pulpit, he drew his hood over his head and remained quite still for some time, apparently in prayer, while his congregation waited patiently. Meanwhile the monks in the monastery chapel distinctly saw him come out of his stall and take his part in the service. That done, he disappeared from their sight. At that precise moment, St. Anthony, his meditation finished, rose from his knees in the pulpit and continued his sermon.

The ability to see the human aura is another form of objective sight, easy to develop and interesting to study. Some years ago an investigation of auras was undertaken by a group of students of occult science in France, aided by others in England and Germany, about five thousand auras being examined by clairvoyants, each independently of the others. Among other discoveries it was noted that women are far better able to hold a given colour in the aura for long periods than are men, also that yellow predominates in feminine auras. And that the matter of the physical body is of the nature of lattice-work, letting in the emanations of light from the higher or spiritual bodies, which in passing through the lattice break up the light into colours. Goethe, that greatest of occultists, stated that colour is the result of the sufferings of light imprisoned in matter and subjected to the pain of limitation.

The initial discovery of the human aura is due to the experiments made by the German scientist Reichenbach, born in 1788. He found that light streams

from the head and finger-tips of men and women, thus laying the foundation for modern research in animal magnetism.

Highly trained clairvoyants have sensed sounds given out by old historic buildings.

Adepts have left behind them accounts of how they picked up curious sounds occasioned by the vibrations of certain plants whose growth is of unusual rapidity. In Dr. Rudd's manuscript there are accounts of "wonderful and delightful musick heard from the air a hundred miles from land", and how he heard "a distinct voice coming from the shore of a desert island off the coast of Turkey."

Subjective sight and hearing can best be developed by the practice of meditation, during which the mind perceives without the help of the corresponding objective senses, and according to the quality of the meditating mind will the revelation of the inner senses be. If one is given to contemplative incursions into the higher realms, the psychic force flows freely and, as Schiller said, "can carry him to the very portals of the impossible."

Dr. Besant, in her book on *Thought Power*, tells us that "anyone who determines to lead a spiritual life must daily devote some time to meditation. . . Only to the mind concentrated, steady, shut out from the world, can the Divine reveal itself. . . In that silence, peace and strength and force flow into the soul, and the man of meditation is ever the most efficient man in the world. . . he wastes no time, scatters no energy, misses no opportunity. Such a man governs events. He shares the Divine Life, therefore shares the Divine Power."

It appears that the brain of man, and very probably that of animals too, is capable of registering that which the physical senses have never contacted.

Those who are awake on higher planes see people on those planes and hear them speak, but all they see and hear has no material existence at all. It amounts to a miracle that these sights and sounds are remembered and can be recalled at will in spite of the fact that the outer senses have never received them. There must be, therefore, within the human brain an unknown power recording the higher vibrations received by the inner senses.

In fact, there are no other worlds, there are merely different kinds of matter, which, being strange to us, serve as veils to hide other planes of being from our objective sight. We call the next plane the unseen world, but that does not necessarily mean that it is unseeable.

The sense of sight is the most useful for the purpose of research in the hidden planes, because it is the one most under control. If gifted enough, the seer can command it to function, and can stop that functioning by opening his eyes, but sounds or the touch of astral bodies and so on cannot so easily be avoided or induced.

If there is a strong desire on the part of the occult student to expand consciousness on other planes, the following method will be found valuable.

A quiet nook, either indoors or out, should be chosen, and arrangements made to ensure undisturbed occupation of it for at least *an hour* or better still, for an indefinite period. Having secured this interval of peace—a difficult matter in any household, one must admit—the student should sit with closed eyes, composed in body and in mind and protect himself from evil influences by prayer or by pronouncing a Divine Name. Then let him imagine himself in beautiful surroundings, conjuring up to his inner sight a lovely landscape or the interior of a building,

perhaps a church if so desired, creating it in the inner mind exactly as he would like to have it. This picture must be kept firmly before the inner sight and not allowed to fade out or to slip to one side, as it will do at first unless dealt with severely.*

Perhaps nothing will happen at first, or a long time of such efforts may elapse before any definite results are achieved, but it may very well be that at the very first attempt, beautiful and interesting pictures will become visible. Symbols may be shown, or instruction or advice be received in some form or other. These will bear fruit later on. So long as consciousness is maintained of "I am I," and "I am here", obsession cannot take place. It is imperative to retain consciousness of the material world, even if that consciousness may sometimes recede into the background, for there will still be enough of the "I" to stand on guard against danger or evil.

In any case there will be a gradual unfoldment of powers and faculties which will come into their own later on. Meanwhile there is much to be gained from the flashes of intuitional knowledge which reach one in deep meditation.

There are no adventures more interesting than these excursions into the higher worlds. They are a pleasant preparation for the final floating out upon the river of Death which will one day carry us to such experiences that will be fully grasped only by those who have while still in the body, learned to reach out to the fuller life beyond

"Leaving the old, both worlds they
view
Who stand upon the threshold of the
new."

That was spoken of death, but it is possible to reach the borders of the new world without leaving the physical body. On astral journeyings such as are sug-

gested, one learns to understand how glorious must be the freedom of those who are loosed from the flesh. That too little known poet, Robert Stokes, wrote these words upon the death of his sister:—

“We bring a Queen to most high funeral,
Shout, mortals, throw roses on the pall!
Death sets free, it is life that holds in thrall.

Blow, O trumpets of eternity!
Shout, Sons of God, from sea to sea!
Stars, slash your shining shields, a soul is free!”

Contact with higher aspects of matter is not easy to obtain, there is no royal road to spiritual knowledge, just as there is none to material knowledge. If we want it very much we must work to obtain it. “root, hog, or die” is the law for the soul as for the body.

But deep meditation, entered upon with intelligence and common sense, is the most favourable means of opening up the planes. The quietness of the physical body, the comparative clarity of mind induced by the closing the mental doors to disturbing thoughts and emotions, and the tranquillity of soul which is the outcome of these, are all conducive to the reception of instruction.

A novice, unless specially gifted, may at first see only pictures, later on he may be taught by symbols, or directly in writing he can read, presented in letters of light. Sometimes he will hear those strange inward sounds of speech which, like most psychic experiences, cannot be explained to the satisfaction of those who have not themselves passed through them.

The astral forms of those who passed over can but rarely be touched, for they recoil or withdraw if it is attempted. Or else a circle of light, like a child's hoop, surrounds them and all endeav-

ours to pass through are in vain.

Beginners in the practice of meditation may find it necessary to build up a picture of a place in which to imagine oneself, where one can look at whatever may ensue, or what beings may arrive. This building up is called creative imagination. This background becomes in time the foundation place for happenings, appearances and speech which will take place upon a different plane of being.

Every person who meditates in this way, or indeed in any way, learns in time to discriminate between the false and the true, between the building up by means of creative imagination and those flashes of intuition which bring with them genuine occurrences. One who is experienced along these lines learns to recognize that which is true by signs peculiar to his own individuality. This cannot be satisfactorily explained to others, the miracles of form and sound which are revealed are for oneself alone.

The existence of that which is seen can be tested by one thing only, and that is synthesis. If seers all down the ages, in many lands, and working each independently of the others, see a certain scene or object on the higher planes while in meditation, then that scene or object may be regarded as genuine.

This is, of course, reading the akasic records. Akasa is a Sanskrit word meaning “shining light.” It is significant that one of its symbols is a shut eye. It is not creative only, but reflective as well. It is the spirit of the higher elements, the medium of perfect initiation. Another of its symbols is the acacia blossom. There may be some connection between the words Akasa and acacia, but it does not appear in any dictionary. Newton called the ether the Brain of God—Sensorium Dei—how much more, then must the akasa be the medium of His Power?

It is usual for astral visions to be regarded by relatives and friends of the seer as nonsense or imagination. What is imagination? It was called by the ancients the "Diaphane", because it permits impressions from the inner light to pass through its transparent quality, and conveys them to the physical senses. Imagination is the power to conceive images, it is the reflection in man of the creative power of God, the power behind all the great deeds and words which sway the world, it is behind the inspiration of the Scriptures, the works of the great writers and the teachings of the founders of religions. And their powers are largely built up in meditation. Thus contacting the invisible worlds is a form of magic. The two powers necessary to creation are will and imagination. We are inhabitants of a universe created by the will and imagination of God. If in meditation we develop our powers far enough we are on the way to attain to union with the Highest, as did the great mystics of old. We can be made into useful receivers of the divine light, and with it illumine the difficult path of life for ourselves and others.

The true occultist is he who has so far developed his will that he can make his body serve his will and his spirit serve his body. With his will he forces his body to quiescence, with his will he calls his imagination into being and into action, and upon the pictures brought forth by means of creative imagination his spirit, free to act, will project the truth, dimly at first, but with ever-increasing clarity and speed. It is a hitherto almost unexplored region, this of the higher worlds, and offers an immense field for investigation.

The great adept of the Middle Ages, Paracelsus, called imagination that first and best gift bestowed by Nature upon mankind.

Kant, the ablest fighter for spiritual knowledge in modern times, held that added to the knowledge we gain through the medium of the senses there is the knowledge of the higher planes, which can undoubtedly be obtained through intuition. Fichte believed that the ego—i.e. the Higher Self—is the only thing of which we can be absolutely sure. "For the development of intuitional knowledge", says Schelling, "there is nothing so valuable as meditation."

Are our visions less likely to be true because they are invisible on the material plane? This is a question often asked. The only answer possible is that the eternal things are invisible to our outer eyes, even those which, strictly speaking, belong to this earth, such as electricity in its higher forms, gravitation, centripetal and centrifugal force, the gases, to say nothing of the spiritual forces governing the lives and fate of man—love, wisdom, and so forth. "The things which are invisible are eternal," said St. Paul, one of the greatest of seers.

Contact with higher states of being can take place in meditation, in spite of the veils of complication and diversity which break up into a thousand facets the working of our lower minds. We can "build ourselves more stately mansions" and leave "our low-vaulted past" for a while and dwell in peaceful spots wherein to rest.

On the outside of a very old house in Danzig, dating from the times when Germany was a nation of poets and philosophers, is the following inscription:—
 "We build here on earth big houses and
 forts,
 And are but alien guests,
 While in the realms above, where we
 shall dwell for long,
 We build not at all."

It is possible that in the days to come, reason will cease to hold all the guiding reins of life, and that imagination in its

highest guise, intuition, will take the place of reason, bringing mankind to the complete realization that truth is beauty and beauty truth.

Intuition is sought alike by mystic and occultist, and the two paths of spiritual research can be united in meditation, for knowledge, the aim of the occultist, can be found therein, and union with God, the hope of the mystic, is attained in a marvellous way through the deep contemplation of His attributes, which brings down to the depths of the human soul the light which reveals Him.

Sir Oliver Lodge held the same view as the Israelites regarding the beneficent supervision of hierarchies of angels over the members of the human race. He does not inform us how to set about contacting them, but the seeker for spiritual knowledge will usually meet with angelic forms during meditation, for the angels are not beyond our reach. Unfortunately we are not aware of them until life has done us much damage, for it is only when we have suffered greatly that we are attracted to research into higher aspects of being.

"The spiritual world," said Ibn Khaldun, "is the real world. Intercourse with it in some form or other differs in intensity according to the nature of the individual. God endows a man with a nature permitting him to lift the veil of the senses from the soul, enabling it to obtain in the world of reality the knowledge it seeks, and to see, sometimes in a flash, the Truth."

The higher worlds are metaphysical regions where the physical no longer holds sway, regions of consciousness and matter, for every state of consciousness has its own grade of matter. The four Elements, of which, with their combinations, all forms of matter are composed, exist, according to the ancient Wisdom, on every plane of being, becoming more and more rarefied as they

ascend the scale. If we think of their respective grades of matter as substances they become better understandable. Meditation helps us to reach these worlds behind the veils of gross matter, and to make contact with the spiritual Adam, the highest self hidden within each human being, traditionally said to have been summoned forth by God when He called to him in the garden—"Adam, where art thou?"

"Arise from thy sleep, and remember thou art a king's son".

"Arise and shake off thy foul body of dust." These, and many other callings forth of the higher Adam are found in the Christian Gnosis.

No amount of study, or of intellectual attainment, will open up the higher worlds, a higher state of consciousness must be reached. There is no dullness in deep meditation, its range is infinite, beyond every apparently ultimate truth or beauty there is something still to be sought and found. On earth, beauty is often saddening:—

"Oh God, forgive me, that I no more
without a pang
Thy choicest gifts can see."

In the visions of our inner eyes we find hidden glories and are satisfied. We may reach to the akasa, called by the Israelites the AINSOPH, the Unknowable Light. In the Zohar it is explained that the light of the celestial world penetrates the material kingdom and communicates directly with man by means of his super-senses. This truth has been known to Jewry all down the centuries, as well as to Christian and Indian adepts.

That form of akasa which has a place within the body of man does not age with the physical body, but passes over at death with the soul, freed from all change, becoming united with the substantial matter of the higher realms, that is, supported from above by that

which is higher than itself, no longer upheld from below, or sub-stantially. This may explain the occult dictum that gravitation is only half the law, levitation being the other half.

If by patient practise we attain to shutting out the world with all its happenings and trials, we let loose the subconscious knowledge awaiting liberation within us, ready to unite with the Higher Self, and so we receive the stimulus so often wanting and so much needed to carry out our work on earth. As regards the genuineness of the help we get, Keyserling tells us that "psychic phenomena are just as objective as those of matter, mental images can become precisely such incarnations of metaphysical realities as do material bodies."

Meditation can greatly assist the seeker for truth to prepare his soul for that exalted form of revelation known as cosmic consciousness, that spiritual illumination desired by both mystic and occultist, that sudden, totally unexpected, temporary linking up of the lower self with the higher, accompanied by an indescribable, brilliantly enveloping blaze of light. The veil is rent asunder and an inrush of universal consciousness takes place. The marvellous experience at an end there remains a greater or lesser degree of permanent expansion on the earth plane, a heightening of the personality, for when the true akasic light has once been received and recognized, the recipient can never be quite the same again—he has "found the Beloved". He is henceforth attuned to higher rates of vibration, and although the wonderful revelation is not lasting, although the trumpets have ceased to sound around the battlements of eternity, although nothing may remain of their grand message but the memory, there will still be a permanent uplift of the whole soul.

Man is expanding all the time, his

pioneer faculties will never cease to act, he will never rest upon his laurels, spiritual or material. Pioneers of the spirit in many parts of the world, are seeking new ways of conquering the remote planes of being, where the higher self has its home, attempting to reach upwards towards the source of wisdom and love. So far, and no further, as a man can contact his higher self, is he divine, and to do that successfully he must reach out to find it, otherwise it will forever elude him. It is the destiny of mankind to seek, and ultimately to find, through almost insurmountable difficulties, the divine light.

As for the timidity sometimes felt by beginners on the path as to what they might see in meditation of evil or ugliness, they should remember that their motives must be sincere desire for higher knowledge, rather than curiosity or self-glorification. Protected by purity of purpose, evil can be excluded from visions, and fear disappears under the conviction of the reality of a future life which teaches us that "the tomb is not a blind alley, it closes on the twilight but opens on the dawn." Every fresh vision, every intuitional revelation of the spiritual world, is one more clogging sheath cast off, one more veil pushed aside of the many hiding from us the glories of that world.

Meditation is one of the links of the chain of life. If one can see soul-pictures and reproduce them in some form that will help others to understand their meaning, one is already following the Path, one is assisting to redeem the world. All who are filled with that desire are alive, all the rest are asleep or dead.

By concentrating upon the most spiritual concepts of which our minds are capable we prepare ourselves for the awakening upon the further shore, for the inconceivably more intense vibra-

tions to which we shall be subjected. Thus we shall be in tune with the conditions prevailing in the celestial worlds and the more easily shake off the last remaining fragments holding us to earth life, and take over with us the incorruptible treasures of a purified heart and mind.

*While the author mentions the meditation which leads to cosmic consciousness or intuitional wisdom, the directions given are for the acquiring of astral vision, a subject which while seldom touched upon by our contributors, is within the scope of theosophic enquiry. *The Voice of the Silence* was written as a guide to those who would attempt to arouse their inner powers

and were ignorant of the dangers surrounding the lower psychic energies. Its opening verse emphasizes the necessity for strict mental training as a preliminary to any such attempt; "He who would hear the voice of Nada, the 'Soundless Sound' and comprehend it, he has to learn the nature of Dharana" (the intense and perfect concentration of the mind).

The teachers of the higher meditation recommend that the student take a position which will keep the head and spine erect. Meditation is preceded by strong concentration on the subject selected—and fifteen minutes, not one hour, is said to be quite sufficient during the first year of practice.

Editor.

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