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FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

*To the 84th International Convention
of the Theosophical Society*

BY N. SRI RAM, *President*

We are living at an extraordinary time, for the whole of humanity, a time of great urgency and pressure, when many and far-reaching changes must take place if its future is to be as fair as we all hope it will be. One might say without exaggeration that we are in the throes of a new world beginning to be born out of the old, and though the process is extremely difficult, it cannot be stayed without disaster. Do we not, then, one and all of us who are Theosophists seeking to be helpers of humanity, as well as the Society as a whole, stand in need of a change which, if it is to be real, cannot consist in tinkering, in intellectualizations that mean little in reality, in increasing the volume of activities without a change in spirit and quality? When we look at all that is taking place in the world, the self-centredness of people, their manner of looking at things, their values, and also look at ourselves who are not very different from them in most ways, we can realize that the change which is needed is not of the sort that is achieved today but gets undone tomorrow, but something far more vital and fundamental, which must be part of that total movement which is evolution. In order to go forward there has to be the elimination of so many things in ourselves that belong to our past, so that our life and approach to everything in life

may become simpler and freer, more intelligent and less self-centred.

Although the Society has an aim as high as the human mind can conceive and a constitution which gives its members the greatest measure of freedom, thus investing the Society with great possibilities, yet when the world looks at the Society it looks at ourselves. It judges the Society by what we are, what we are doing and how we do it. The Society consists of ourselves — and sometimes not the best part of ourselves, as is the case when here and there there is an unedifying agitation or quarrel. The Society will be different, our Lodges will be conducted differently, every aspect of our work will assume a new quality and value, and we would be attracting those who are in affinity with the true aims of the work, if we ourselves had this quality and value in ourselves. On the other hand, no programme, however up-to-date and pretentious, however elaborate and ambitious, will by itself make the Society a body of real distinction and a pioneer for the developments that must take place in humanity at large, unless each one of us is himself in a measure a pioneer, and the new era which we sometimes talk about, with its new values, has dawned within ourselves. The new Humanity of Intuition, as Brother Jinarajadasa called it, must come

out of the present humanity, therefore must consist of ourselves and many other like people, but changed from what we are at present.

We need not shrink from the word "change," because life is a process of change in many directions, sometimes even contrary to its main advance, but by wisdom and intelligence we can direct that change and accelerate it enormously. It seems to me that Theosophy as a living Wisdom existing in Nature must be understood in such a way that more and more it is equated with our own living rather than with mere statements which turn into dogmas. We may translate some aspects of the truth that is perceived — Theosophy being the total truth — into words which describe it, but the words are either symbols or describe only the appearance, the sequence, the form of things. They cannot convey the life for which the form is a receptacle, of which it is a partial expression or only a symbol.

Brother Jinarajadasa wrote of *The World as Will, Idea and Emotion*, following obviously Schopenhauer's thesis, and referring to life as we find it everywhere in all its gradations, in man and Nature. But all that life means as experience and action, the beauty that is in it, that is brought out by these aspects into which we divide it, cannot ever be conveyed in words. We can, if we are sufficiently open, be receptive to that beauty, and that will inevitably affect our attitude towards everything and our own inner make-up. Only thus can we experience Theosophy in our lives as a Wisdom which in every aspect of it is an expression of life and related to the process of life, using these terms in no narrow sense, but as including that life which is in the soul of things, the very heart of being.

There are people who read some books or many books on Theosophy. They are stimulated for a time, but soon they get tired and ask: Is this all? They want something new with which to stimulate their tired taste. There might be any number of

books, in fact, there are, if one ranges through the whole of philosophy, science and religion, but after reading them all we might still ask: Is this all? Because knowledge that does not alter our lives is but a burden and an accumulation. On the other hand, a man who aspires to be an artist may learn a few things. He may be shown a few pictures or be taken to a gallery of paintings. He will not ask: Is this all? Because for him art is a matter of creation, also perception, both of which depend on himself. Just as the endeavor of the artist is all the time to create and perceive new things and for that perception he has to be as impressionable as possible along his own lines, so we need to be sensitive to all aspects of life and create something by our action and the very manner of our living, which can even be an unconscious creation but is of value in life's onward march. That creation is of most value, in fact is worthy to be called creation, which is produced or created most genuinely out of oneself, the soul of oneself, where what is felt and perceived is, at least for oneself, of the highest value.

The Divine Wisdom we call Theosophy, poorly as we understand it, teaches us one thing, and that is that in each embodiment of life and in life as a whole there is infinite beauty, infinite riches, and it is man's task to make himself its channel, an instrument for its syllabled expression. This is possible only as each ceases to live and act for himself, centred in his pleasures, schemes, importance and ambitions, but lives for the whole, for all life, throwing himself open to it and taking it into his heart. That is what Theosophy means, translated into terms of living, and not just a propagandist gospel, a set of intellectual dogmas or propositions to be enunciated and believed in, without letting the waters of life break through our encrustations. It is only when life becomes for each one of us, in his measure, an unconscious creation and a continual opening from within, that the whole group of us who constitute the

Society will become a channel for ever-new forces and create in the Society a magnetic field, capable of electrifying those who come within its radiation, and of drawing into it people who can be vital channels of Truth.

The future of the Society depends, to my mind, not on the largeness of its organization nor upon how respectable and well-settled it is, as respectability is usually counted, but upon how much genuineness there is in each one of us, how much earnestness in subordinating ourselves to the work to which we are called for the good of our fellow-beings, in short, upon how much correspondence there is between the benign wisdom that is Theosophy and the ways of our life and action. The Society should not become a mere machine for us to tend, uphold and run mechanically, collecting members as we can and making noise to collect them. The aim of each one of us must be to pour into the movement what he can give to it of himself which will be of value to others, what comes from his heart, his dedication and the pure expression of the truth he perceives.

Mrs. Evelyn Hornidge, the General Secretary of the Irish Section, concludes her Report by saying: "We have something wonderful to tell the world which, if understood, would make the world a different place, a place of peace and greater happiness. We in the Society are here to help in that understanding, to contribute something to the awakening of the hidden divinity in man and a deeper understanding of the meaning of Brotherhood." If I may comment on this statement, there is this wonder in life, in Nature, in ourselves. If we have felt it even to a slight extent, then there will be a flaming enthusiasm in our hearts, and it will not be long before there is a resurgence of life born out of that enthusiasm.

The General Secretary of the Netherlands Section, Mr. A. J. H. van Leeuwen, makes the following observations which are of interest in this connection: "As the centenary jubilee of our Society is drawing near,

we feel as if a new spirit is stirring from within. As in the autumn the leaves are falling, many members are leaving our ranks but now the central trunk and the sturdy branches of our Society can be seen all the clearer. That central trunk is the mystical teaching of the Eternal Wisdom, and in this Section we are experiencing a growing interest in the teachings of spiritual mysticism transcending the acquisitions of science, philosophy and religion, though accepting them all as a feeding soil and a storehouse of valuable and indispensable information." In the Netherlands Section two Lodges have been discontinued, and there has been a fall in membership even since last year. In view of the fact that there has been a similar decrease in some other Sections too, I would say in terms of Mr. van Leeuwen's simile: Let the leaves fall, so long as there is life uprising in the central trunk. It will not take long for the tree to clothe itself with leaves, young, fresh and new, when once it is rejuvenated in that trunk, when there is new life and spirit, the spirit that is needed to renovate the world. If at present "we do not succeed in moving deeply the world," as says Mr. Paul Thorin, who is now the General Secretary for France, succeeding Mr. Francis Brunel, it is because we are not deeply moved within ourselves. So long as interest moves within a narrow set of ideas it must soon come to a stop. But if it flows along ever-widening vistas — Theosophy is a view of life which opens such vistas — then that expansion can go on indefinitely.

In the United States of America, a Section exceedingly well organized for systematic work, there are now 4,521 members and 148 Lodges. Mr. J. S. Perkins, the General Secretary, gives some details of the radio propaganda carried on by the Section. In six cities there is a broadcast on some Theosophical subject each week during 52 weeks in the year; another city presents a 39 week series; in three others it is on a 26 week basis; two other places present a 13 week series; most of them with

financial assistance from the National Headquarters and using carefully prepared scripts.

The Indian Section has now 7,162 members, 432 Lodges and 50 Centres. The General Secretary mentions in his Report the starting of a Department of Studies at the Section Headquarters to provide Lodges with syllabuses, lists of books, guidance for the making of Lodge programmes, slides, tape-lectures and other similar aid. The Department is also intended to conduct correspondence courses, answer inquiries and train workers and lecturers. It is really several Departments in one, and as it develops its activities, it should prove an important agency for the strengthening and vivification of Lodge work throughout the country.

Dr. L. J. Bendit, the General Secretary of the English Section, while recording a small decline in membership, feels "a certain sense of movement within the Section as if a new current is beginning to flow". He thinks there is a healthy tone underlying the Section and the Society as a whole. A feature of the work of this Section is the Research Centre with which Dr. and Mrs. Bendit have been always closely associated. The Centre has just published a book entitled *The Mystery of Healing*, a subject of general interest not only to Theosophists but also to many groups outside the Society. The Science Group of the Theosophical World University, which is the larger title of the Research Centre, issues a journal, which Dr. Bendit says, circulates not only outside England but also outside the Society.

The General Secretary of the Finnish Section, Mme. Sylvi Horstio, reports increased activity in the Section. The Blavatsky Lodge in Helsinki has started a new journal to appeal to the public, in addition to the Sections magazine *Teosofi*. Another Lodge, *Kalevala*, has published a Finnish translation of Miss Clara Codd's *Ageless Wisdom of Life*. The smaller Lodges outside Helsinki are being frequently visited

by lecturers from Helsinki. As a result of these efforts perhaps, Mme. Horstio says, the interest in Theosophy in Finland is growing.

A Section where there is much new activity and great enthusiasm at present is Cuba. Mr. Alfredo Puig, who is its new General Secretary, writes that, thanks to the recent revolution in Cuba, peace reigns all over the land and there is perfect freedom for every citizen to go about at all times in full safety. He and his co-workers are trying to make the best possible use of these conditions. The regular work of the Lodges in the interior, which had to be suspended because of the civil war, has been resumed in full, and several Lodges have gained strength by new members. A very special feature of this revival, says Senor Puig, is that youth are attracted to Theosophy. A special Convention of the Section was held in June in Santiago in the extreme east of the island, in order to re-knit sundered ties and re-start the work in that part of the country. The General Secretary is re-organizing the work in such a way that the Lodges in every province are regularly visited. He himself issues to all members a monthly bulletin named *Contact*, containing suggestions and news of interest.

Mexico is another Section which reports a similar resurgence. Mr. Arturo Vado Lopez who is its General Secretary, following Mr. Pena Gil who was custodian of the Section affairs for 22 years, writes of the changes that have taken place as a result of decisions by the National Convention held last December in Mexico, attended by all the 26 Lodges of the Section. The Lodges are now being visited by members of the National Council and the National Headquarters is in constant touch with the Lodges. The Lodges themselves are actively carrying on propaganda through small publications which are distributed all around. Mr. Lopez mentions the work of a member, Mr. Alcaraz, publishing at his own expense a booklet series and distributing them through the Lodges. It was necessary,

says Mr. Lopez, not only to focus attention step by step on every aspect of the work, but also to harmonize psychologically the different elements for more co-operation and effectiveness in the work.

In Canada the first Convention of the Section was held only this year, and judging by its success, there is reason to hope that it will be an annual event hereafter. The Convention took place in Toronto, and Colonel Thomson, the General Secretary, says it has given an impetus particularly to the Lodges in the eastern part of the country.

An important event in the Australian Section, writes Miss Helen Zahara, the General Secretary, was the welcoming of a new Isis Lodge in Sydney, consisting of persons who were formerly members of the independent Sydney Theosophical Society but have now joined the Australian Section. Their joining this Society is not only a cause for happiness but also evidence of the friendly atmosphere that they feel to be existing in the Society.

It is not possible for me in this brief survey to mention every Section of the Society; but in all of them, even in those where there is nothing new or special to report, the work is going on steadily.

The most important event this year for Europe as a whole was the 23rd European Federation Congress, held at Hamburg, Germany, in the first week of August. It was attended by some 260 members from 19 countries and was as happy and successful a gathering as its predecessor at Baden.

I myself made a tour in Europe this summer, visiting Rome, Paris, the British Isles, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Holland, Denmark and Germany, and on my way back, Athens in Greece.

The School of the Wisdom at Adyar began its sessions this year on October 2nd, and has completed the first half of its course. I am very glad that Miss Clara Codd has been able to come and help this work, before returning to South Africa. It is a very good sign that there are more

students this year than in any previous year, and the twenty-four who are present represent Australia, England, United States, New Zealand, South Africa, East Africa, Viet-Nam, India, Malaya, the Netherlands and Hungary.

A number of the Section Reports mention the activities of the Young Theosophist groups. In Australia these groups are active in the larger Lodges. In New Zealand they have their own programmes but assist the Lodges on special occasions. I have in previous years mentioned the work of Young Theosophists in Europe. One of the most active Young Theosophist Groups which has many plans for expanding its work is in Argentina.

The work of the Adyar Library is making steady progress. Dr. Sreekrishna Sarma has had to leave the Library to take up work in the Venkateshvara University. Our grateful thanks are due to him for his valuable services. The Adyar Library's 75th anniversary falls in 1961. I share the hope expressed by the Librarian, Mrs. Seetha Neelakantan, that the new Adyar Library building which we have been planning will be commenced soon and completed by then. We have a certain sum of money reserved for this building but need a substantial addition to it to make the building large enough to house the Library conveniently providing the necessary amenities for different departments of its work.

Among those who have passed away this year I must mention here Mr. Henry Hotchener, well known in the American Society for his life-long devotion to the Society and a worker since the days of Colonel Olcott; Mr. G. N. Gokhale who was for nine years General Secretary of the Indian Section, and by constant travelling throughout India and work at Varanasi contributed greatly to the development of the Section; Mr. H. S. L. Polak who was for many years Treasurer of the English Section and had many contacts with Indians on account of his interest in Indian politics and the welfare

of Indians abroad; and Mr. C. R. Groves who was for some years a much-loved General Secretary of the English Section, and has been at Adyar a number of times, mainly in connection with the work of the School of the Wisdom. Our affectionate thoughts go with these Brethren and others who have passed on during the year.

I must again thank all those who have contributed to the Adyar Day collection, and particularly members of the Theosophical Society in America, who for many years have been the principal contributors to it. I would like to point out once again that the total of the *Adyar Besant Commemorative Fund*, which was established in 1948 to provide a steady income for the upkeep of Adyar, still stands at only 65% of the then target. Because of the increase in cost of almost everything in India we have continually to increase not only wages and salaries, but also other expenses. The annual deficit, as the Treasurer's Report will point out, is still a huge figure, of which

only a small portion is covered by the interest received from the A.B.C. Fund.

The term of office for which I was elected President will be expiring on 17th February 1960, and there is at present an election going on, for which two candidates have been nominated namely, myself and Brother Geoffrey Hodson. As I have often said, the strength of the Society and its progress should not depend upon who are its Presidents, General Secretaries and other office-holders. Each one of the Society's 34,000 and odd can help where he is in his own way. Each must shine with his own light and contribute to the total illumination. In his own heart by himself each one must find the truth. To give expression to that truth, to utter the message that will give the greatest help and comfort to all, no office is needed. Yet when needed one has to answer the call and take up the post, whether it be that of door-keeper or President, and give of his best in that capacity.

Theosophy And The Universal Basis Of Religion

BY STEPHAN A. HOELLER

A great deal has been said and written in recent times about the seeming necessity to develop one Universal Religion, to gather, as it were, what we consider the best teachings of all the great religions in the world; to find a common denominator and elevate it to the position of the One Universal World Faith. Movements such as the Universalist and Unitarian Churches in the West, certain neo-Vedantin, and neo-Buddhist religious cults in the East, as well as the efforts of isolated individuals like the actor-world-traveler, Lew Ayres, all represent a world-wide tendency toward the goal of universal religion.

On the surface it would appear that these movements in their objectives very closely parallel the aims and work of the Theo-

sophical Movement since 1875 which through the comparative study of religions and through its basic teaching of the brotherhood of religions has appeared in history as the prime pioneer of universalism in religion. Indeed, many Theosophists have from time to time expressed the hope that the basic elements of modern Theosophy, namely the tenets of Karma, Reincarnation and Evolution, with their lesser attendant doctrines, would constitute the basis of the future world religion, supplanting as it were the separate theologies of the religious systems of today.

While it is perfectly true that there is a *certain kind* of Theosophy at the foundation of all the religious systems, and that this Theosophy is indeed the sole basis of

all religious thought, emotion and experience, it would be a mistake to assume that the existence of this one foundation logically sustains the notion that we shall have one universal religion and that this will be none else but a glorified form of modern Theosophy as we know it.

On the face of the earth we find an amazing variety of plants; trees, bushes, flowers, etc. growing side by side, but being rooted without exception in one and the same element: the earth. In the same manner there is one common essential religious experience, that of the union of man with the "Divine Ground," which forms the basis of all religious systems and practices. The essence of religion is not teaching or even what some people term worship, but experience; the experience of our at-one-ment with the Divine essence which lies at the back of our own consciousness and at the bottom of all things visible and invisible. All belief is but an imperfect substitute for this experience.

The advocates of modern Theosophy have frequently made the mistake of regarding Theosophy mainly as a body of teachings composed of Karma, Reincarnation, Evolution, the inner government of the world, and related "points of doctrine." Similarly the theologians and religious philosophers of all lands and times have mistakenly identified religion with their limited and limiting notions of God, Creation, Salvation, Sin, Virtue, etc.

Theosophy, if understood in the true neo-Platonic sense, is much more than a mere conglomeration of various cosmological and ethical teachings (all of an admittedly sublime and meaningful nature); rather, we should say that *Theosophy is the theory that direct knowledge of spiritual things is possible to man.*

Phrased theologically, we could say that Theosophy maintains that man, by virtue of the Eternal Spirit within him, can know God; that being ourselves undetached sparks of the Divine Flame we can travel

in consciousness back, as it were, along the path of the fiery thread which connects us as sparks with our Mother the Flame, and merge ourselves with our Divine Source. Since man is a fragment of God, it is possible for him to know God, whose nature he shares. Or, in other words, the human spirit as a spark of the Divine Flame partakes not only of the quality of "sparkness" (human nature) but also of the mystic quality of "flameness" (divine nature), and being in essence at all times one with its divine background, it must become consciously aware of its oneness with the same. This, in brief, is the essence of *basic* Theosophy, basic being that on which all other parts of a super-structure are based; this also is basic and universal religion, for it is this theory which constitutes the rationale of the mystical experience (Unio Mystica, Samadhi, Satori, etc.) which is the aim of all valid religious effort.

It is in this one fundamental theory or method that all religious, philosophies, yogas and mysteries are ever one; this mystical "philosophia perennis" is the forever unaffected and unchangeable Universal Religion of Present, Past and Future.

Vain are the dreams and theories about the unification of all religions so long as this unification is perceived on the level of superficialities and incidentals, rather than on the level of the continually existing mystical unity of the one common religious experience. True, we can find in at least four of the great world religions the Golden Rule and what is known among Christians as the Sermon on the Mount, and many other ethical teachings expressed in slightly different words, but with the same underlying meaning, but for each and every such similarity we find a hundred conflicting dogmas, and incompatible commandments. No, the unity of religions cannot and will never be found in the realm of theology and ethics for these are but the external adjuncts, the often deformed phenomenal appendices of the one central

religious experience, which is mystical union.

Similarly it would be unrealistic and foolish to expect that a new world religion would spring into existence, which would be based upon the modern theosophical "dogmas" (articles of faith) of Reincarnation, Karma, Evolution, Masters, etc., for these points of doctrine are just as non-fundamental in their relation to the "philosophia perennis" of the mystical experience as are their religious counterparts mentioned above.

Theosophists, as well as religionists of

all beliefs, should come to an increasing realization of the *true*, the one and only basis upon which all religious beliefs, practices and systems are founded. Let us, therefore, instead of looking for universal religion, strive to bring about the Brotherhood of all Religions, a Brotherhood which is rooted in Theosophy, or as H. P. Blavatsky called it, "Divine Theurgy," the active practice of mysticism — a practice which is within the realm of possibility for all of us, if we but correctly understand our Theosophy, the Ancient Wisdom of the Gods.

PROBLEMS

BY RICHARD HEINEMANN

Having been invited to write an article "on some phase of Science", I think it only good manners at least to mention the word Science: so I shall do so in the preface.

To me, Science is a tool. Its primary function lies not in the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, which is something that easily can get out of hand (even with respect to the study of Theosophy). Its importance lies in the light it can shed on our relationship with our environment and with Life, and on how we can make the most effective use of the opportunities we are offered in this world.

Opportunity, of course, is another name for a problem. There is no problem that is not a gateway to a deeper and richer life. There is no defeat that does not hold unlimited possibilities of victory.

Actually, our problems are among the most valuable things that belong to us. I must emphasize the words that our problems "belong to us". This relationship arises from the fact that our problems really are not external to us, but arise from those facets of our natures that need strengthening, or that represent flaws or

weaknesses in our internal structures. Problems offer us the possibilities both of discovering such weaknesses and of overcoming them.

In the school of Life, we know, or at least have the possibility of knowing, what our problems are. This arises from the simple consideration that if we already have learned a particular lesson, it is no longer a problem for us. If on the other hand a lesson belongs to some higher grade in the school of Life, which is to say, if the lesson is too advanced for us, it simply does not present itself to our minds as a problem. The problems that belong to us therefore represent our own level of achievement and of effort. Whatever our problems may be, we can have the assurance that they are not given to us without our being given or possessing the power of deriving some important benefits from them — and this conclusion has been reached entirely from a consideration of the nature of the problems themselves, and of the manner in which they come to our attention. From this it follows that our first and most important business in this world is to deal with our own problems.

We are under the obligation also of respecting other people's property rights with respect to their problems, and some of us do not easily learn this lesson. We have not developed our own strength of character, or our own understanding, by having other people solve our problems for us. We have made many mistakes, we have done many wrong things: but a mistake is not final, and a wrong action (though it may have far-reaching consequences) does not commit us to a way of life forever. We may need the experience of shallow things to acquire a full understanding of their shallowness, and to learn that they hold no real sustenance, or no real happiness for us. Some of us may need only brief experiences with such things to turn away from them. Others may spend many lifetimes learning this lesson: but while they are learning, the shallow things belong to them, because it is only through a continuing contact with these things, and testing of them, that these people can learn the lessons that belong to their own level of development.

Most of us like to think we can make other people better by preaching to them, or by telling them how we believe they should solve their problems. In fact, some of us become quite bitter and even abusive when people fail to follow our advice, and work on their problems in ways that suit their own natures. I like to think of George Bernard Shaw's remark: "It is always a silly thing to give advice, but to give good advice is absolutely fatal."

The fact is that people learn from experience: usually and primarily from their own experience, but occasionally from the experience of others. There are only two ways in which a precept can help us: (1) it can strike a responsive spot in our own experience, or (2) it can linger in our memory until an experience comes to us through which we can begin to interpret the precept.

There are four stages by which something is learned. There may be many names

for these stages. I call them:

1. Information. The fact or idea comes to our attention. We may remember it or we may temporarily "forget" it until something happens that reminds us of it. The characteristic of this stage is that we are aware of the fact or idea without exploring its relationship with other facts or ideas. Sometimes this stage blends immediately into the second stage as the idea strikes a receptive spot in our existing structure of ideas. Otherwise the bit of information remains in our memory until our external or internal experience brings it into a relationship with other information or ideas.
2. Learning. In this stage we acquire an insight into the meaning of the fact or idea on an intellectual level. We can think with it and relate it to other ideas. In this stage it becomes a part of our active intellectual equipment. We can manipulate it and study it.
3. Understanding. In this stage the deeper meanings of the fact or idea begin to relate themselves to our understanding on a level deeper than that of the intellect, and which we may in a mystical sense call the "heart life". This is the first stage in which the idea begins to become a part of what we may call our real nature. This "real nature" might be understood as the distilled essence of past experiences — the parts of these past experiences (in this and previous lives) that have become qualities of character. In this and the succeeding stage the idea, through experience and testing, becomes transformed from an idea that is understood intellectually into a principle that can be tested by the interactions of the personality with its environment, and finally into a more permanent quality of character. The distinctive characteristic of this third stage is that our grasp

of the idea still depends, at least to some extent, on our intellectual memory. Its relationship to our deeper qualities has not become strong enough to survive a period of amnesia, though undoubtedly we should retain a predisposition to relearn it.

4. Wisdom. In this stage the idea has become so firmly imbedded in our nature that if our intellectual memory of the principle were wiped out, we should still tend to live and act in accordance with it. This is vividly shown in hysterical fugue or amnesia cases, in which the person may forget his name and identity, fail to recognize his family and friends or his place of residence, and may assume a new identity and a new mode of life, perhaps in a distant place and with new friends and surroundings, but retains his basic habit patterns and rarely if ever engages in activities that would have been morally incompatible with his pre-amnesic character.*

From an understanding of these stages of learning, we can see the relationships between precept and experience. An idea does not enter our consciousness full formed but only as a seed that requires nourishment from our experience in order to grow. It is possible, and indeed not uncommon, that merely hearing or reading the statement of an idea may bring a deep "intuitive" understanding of it. We can best understand this by realizing that the idea must already have been present in our understanding in a latent form, requiring only this statement as a sort of "baptism" to awaken it to activity and manifestation.

"Those that have ears, let them hear." But the "ear" referred to is a receptive spot

* Coleman, James C. "Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life", second edition, pages 199-202. Scott, Foresman and Co., Chicago, 1956.

in one's nature. Only those who have such receptive spots can "hear". In others the stated idea can function only as a seed, which however, in time and with the (perhaps unconscious) nourishment of experience, can itself become a receptive site for future "hearing".

When we deal with a problem, there are several possible outcomes: (1) We can solve it and acquire the resulting strength. (2) We can make a mistake and learn from the mistake. (3) We can fail to find the lesson or meaning in the problem, through inexperience, indifference, or because our minds are too filled with preconceived ideas. (4) We can work on it for a while and then lose interest. (5) Through the intervention of some other person or event we can have the problem taken away from us.

It is rather obvious that in the last three cases we shall have some further dealings with the problem, which we must carry into the future as unfinished business. Obvious also in this statement of the matter is the fact that we must carry it into the future in the form of imperfections in our own natures, which in their interactions with our environment will reproduce the problem again and again, until we have solved it to the point that we know the answer "by heart" and have eliminated the particular imperfections that gave rise to it.

It has been said that strength is made perfect in weakness. This "weakness" is nothing but an inability to escape from a problem in any other way except by solving it.

"Between man and the animal—whose Monads, or Jivas—are fundamentally identical—there is the impassible abyss of Mentality and Self-consciousness . . . and what is it that creates such difference, unless man is an animal *plus a living God* within his physical shell?"

The Secret Doctrine, 11, 85.

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

It is with sincere regret I announce the demise of one of our oldest members in the person of Mrs. Margaret Rayment who joined the Society in 1919. Here is a eulogy from the Orpheus Lodge sent me by the president: "The members of the Orpheus Lodge deeply regret to announce the death of Mrs. Charles Rayment at the age of 83. Mrs. Rayment had been a member for nearly forty years and her early interest and enthusiasm were greatly valued by her fellow members. Unfortunately circumstances had prevented her active participation at recent meetings". To which I would add that our sympathy is expressed for one who so courageously worked for the benefit of the Cause.

No doubt our readers have noted the recent scurrilous attacks—which seem to arise periodically—on the character of Madam Blavatsky in book form and articles written by literary (?) hacks who evidently make a living by publishing sensational items of a peculiar and salacious character. Recently a book written by a Mr. Symonds and an article in *Cosmopolitan* of a particularly nauseous type evoked much indignation and condemnation among our adherents and many letters were written in protest. A reply from the editor of *Cosmopolitan* to a protest by our Miss Laura Gaunt, I am glad to quote; "Madame Blavatsky has been defended in the mails by a number of her disciples and descendants, to whom we shall apologise publicly as soon as space permits. Meanwhile, we offer our apologies, and those of writer Arturo Gonzalies, Jr., who tells us 'I was completely taken in by the memoirs of Madame Blavatsky's evil cousin Witte. May I add only that many Atlantean scholars have fallen into the same trap as I did.' Signed, The Editors." This apology is appreciated and we could wish that other publishers of such nefarious effusions could

see their way to doing the same thing or at least have some check on what they publish.

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AUDITOR'S REPORT

Here is a copy of our auditor's report. "This is to certify that I have examined the accounts of the Theosophical Society in Canada for the years 1958 and 1959 and found the books, etc. in good order. Signed, Ralph A. Webb, C.P.A." and dated February 17, 1960.

I would again remind our readers that we have bound volumes of *The Canadian Theosophist* complete for the past thirty-eight years. Any or all of these make wonderful reading for theosophical students and a delightful gift to like-minded friends. The price of Vods. 1 to 28 (No. 6 out of print) is \$2. each. The last ten volumes, 31-38 are bound as double volumes (viz. two year's issues in one binding), and are priced at \$3.50 each post paid.

* * * * *

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

On going to press I received a cablegram from Adyar informing me that "Sri Ram elected president". No doubt in due course I will receive full details of the voting, etc. which will appear in our next issue. In the meantime I take the opportunity of congratulating Mr. Sri Ram on his re-election and trust that his extended term of office will be happy, fruitful and beneficial to the Society at large.

The legacy with the Section is to benefit by is now approaching settlement and it appears that it will greatly exceed what we expected, consequently there is much speculation, not to say buoyancy by the Executive as to how to take advantage of this windfall. Letters have been sent to Executive members to devise ways and means and we hope thereby to have suggestions of real merit to place before the next meeting which we shall publicize in due course.

E. L. T.

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REINCARNATION NOTES

Reincarnation is quite evidently receiving much more attention in Church circles in Great Britain than in the Churches here as the following items indicate.

The Quarterly Review of the Churches' Fellowship for Psychical Study, reporting the proceedings at a Regional Council of the Fellowship, stated that, "At the afternoon session the speaker was Mr. Eric Harrison, President of the Devon and Cornwall

Healers' Association. On this occasion, his subject was 'Reincarnation'. He gave an excellent and impartially presented analysis of this controversial theory and handled his questioners admirably in the hour-long discussion that followed. It was interesting to note that both our clergy and lay members seemed equally divided in their views."

Dr. Leslie Weatherhead's booklet, *The Case for Reincarnation*, has been reprinted. To Dr. Weatherhead, Reincarnation is an essential part of the Christian faith and he openly teaches it in the City Temple, London. His booklet contains an excellent exposition of the theory with many quotations from Christian sources. This reprint also contains a poem on Pre-Existence, written by Francis Cornford of Cambridge, who received the Queen's 1959 Gold Medal for poetry.

The minister of a Presbyterian Church in Earling, a suburb of London, was requested by his own congregation to give a sermon on Reincarnation. He telephoned immediately for some literature on the subject and was sent Dr. Weatherhead's booklet and other booklets, including *You Will Come Back* by Miss F. E. Goold, which appeared originally in *The Canadian Theosophist*.

These three straws in the wind are indicative of a current of popular opinion slowly tending toward the ancient doctrine of Reincarnation. How different from the early days of Theosophy when the theory was first enunciated to the Western world.

But this doctrine does not stand by itself alone and one cannot consider the hypotheses of Reincarnation without at the same time thinking about some of its associated doctrines. One of these is Karma, the law of action and of the just and equitable consequences of action; another is the eternal continuity of life. This trinity of ideas, if pondered over, will enable a man to establish a philosophy of life based upon wholeness, law, order, reason, purpose, and his own self responsibility in all things.

Alfred Percy Sinnett - A Fragment Of Memory

BY J. M. PRENTICE

This is not an exhaustive study of the life and work of Alfred Percy Sinnett; rather it is a brief record of how, like ships that pass in the night and speak to each other in passing, he and I met and saluted each other, after which there remained only the silence.

Some words, however, are requisite and necessary for students in these later days who know little, and in many cases, care less, for those exciting days when Theosophy was newly introduced into a sceptical and scoffing world. Most students know of H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott and William Q. Judge, the Co-Founders of the Theosophical Society, and those later comers such as Annie Besant, Charles W. Leadbeater and Katherine Tingley. There is a tendency to overlook Sinnett, who, after all, and next only to Blavatsky herself, did most to introduce the idea of the Masters of Wisdom, the great Theosophical principles, and the pursuit of occultism to the Western world. A strange and in many ways, perverse Karma permitted this: contradictions of character served as obstacles to his complete success in the occult life.

Alfred Percy Sinnett was born in 1840 and died in his eighty-second year in 1921. He achieved great distinction in the world of journalism, especially in India, where his brilliant editing of the newspaper, *The Pioneer*, commanded attention. He was attracted to the Founders after they had taken up residence in India, and in August of 1880 he entertained them as his house guests in Simla. As the outcome of this visit, and the phenomena produced by Mme. Blavatsky, Sinnett came into direct contact with the Masters of Wisdom, known as the Mahatmas, and received over the

next four years a vast volume of letters, now enshrined in the British Museum, but available in book form. The following year (1881) Sinnett went to England and produced and published *The Occult World*. It created a furore. There was great scepticism, but there was also a great deal of rather vulgar curiosity, as well as the genuine appreciation of those for whom it was intended. This was followed two years later (1883) by another volume, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and these remained as the practical text books for many years. Later on, after he had returned to London to live, he produced a novel called *Karma*, which was a thinly disguised account of a visit to H. P. Blavatsky at Elberfeld, in Germany. Some years later he published another study of Theosophy entitled *The Growth of the Soul*, but this was frowned on by the Theosophical leaders as being unorthodox. I dimly remember reading it (circa 1907) and being unimpressed, save for the statement that there is a hollow channel for electro-magnetic forces from the North to the South Pole of this globe. The book is not even mentioned nowadays, nor found in bibliographies.

But perhaps Sinnett's least helpful contribution to the history of the Theosophical Society was the publication, posthumously in 1922, of a small volume of 126 pages, entitled *The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe*. It was a bitter book, full of the disenchantment and disillusion of old age and a failing memory. It seemed to me, as I read it with something approaching horror, that the writer was deeply jealous of the woman to whom he owed so much and without whom, he himself would have been utterly forgotten. It is a tragedy that this book was ever published, because of

its weariness, its illogical and unreasonable statements and the ingratitude that disfigures its pages. Sinnett's name is certain to be remembered in Theosophical history, not so much for what he did himself, although this was momentous, as for the fact that he was the recipient of the Mahatma Letters, and almost as many more from H. P. B. herself, which were almost miraculously preserved. These volumes are priceless.

I met A. P. Sinnett on three occasions. In 1917 I came up from Cambridge in order to attend the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society. There was a reception at 19 Tavistock Square, and there we exchanged greetings. Mr. Sinnett was then an impressive looking old man — he was 77 — with a magnificent white moustache and a beautifully trimmed beard. He looked at me closely and then moved away to the General Secretary, whom he engaged in conversation. Possibly as the outcome of this I was approached and asked if I would participate in the Annual Lecture, which, on this occasion, would be a Symposium of three, the speakers being, Mr. Sinnett, Mr. Daniel N. Dunlop and myself. I agreed and the event duly happened. I have forgotten the actual title that was used, but it might well have been "Theosophy and the World Situation". The Convention met at what was one of the most critical stages of the first World War — the U.S.A. had belatedly declared war, but it was not until April of the following year that American forces landed in Europe and participated in the conflict. Mr. Sinnett spoke splendidly; he declared that the war was the outcome of a long series of events and occult failures, going back to the fall of Atlantis, when fire and flood swept away a whole section of mankind. He dealt only with these fundamental causes, as he saw them. Mr. Dunlop followed and looked far into the future. He was a great businessman as well as a great occultist; he foresaw tremendous changes in the economic field and the appearance of an Avatar

whose message would be economic rather than religious. (Mr. Dunlop had never accepted the Krishnamurti Messiah myth.) Then I followed. I was full of my own conceit, I fear, and I attacked both speakers as being completely out of touch with reality. I described their efforts as "chasing rainbows". I placed the trouble in the immediate present, analysed the causes leading up to the outbreak of the war — the Entente Cordiale, the dragons' teeth sown by Edward VII, quite erroneously known as the Peacemaker, and so on. I go cold even now at my own temerity, an unknown from the Colonies — I had been described shortly before as being "typical Colonial" — but I finished up with an impassioned appeal for Universal Brotherhood as the only solution for the world's enigmas. I swept the audience with me, my obvious youth as compared to the other speakers; I was thirty-one but looked very much younger, and there was the glamour of my Australian uniform.

I noticed that both Sinnett and Dunlop were regarding me with something like horror, and it dawned upon me that I had diverted the current of thought which they were directing. As soon as the session ended, Sinnett approached me with obvious feelings. "Well", he said, "you certainly made a mess of that!" I enquired in what particular way I had sinned. "I suppose we should have warned you beforehand, but Dunlop and I were starting a new appraisal of world affairs, and you ruined the whole thing by your direct approach to present problems. It is not with these that we are concerned. Now", he spoke very seriously indeed, "let me tell you something. There is a terrible time ahead unless we can do something to divert it. I will not live to see it, *but you will*, and there will be good reason for you to remember my words. Scores of the worst of the Black Magicians who were responsible for the destruction of Atlantis have already incarnated in Central Europe and Russia, and more are coming. The sin of

Atlantis will be repeated. Selfishness, the lust for power, bloodshed and cruelty unspeakable will ensue. Actually, you have helped to bring this about because of your negative approach. The damage has been done. But remember what I am telling you — the Black Magic of Atlantis, which has been latent for thousands of years, a period of gestation as it were, will be released upon the world. The cycle will end in blood and terror with horror unspeakable. It has been working on higher planes and yet it is *not* inevitable, if the conscience of mankind can be awakened. There will be another war; you will remember the phrase you used this afternoon and regret it bitterly — ‘a war to end all wars’ . . . your Karma, perhaps from today, will involve you in it, when it comes . . .” I was too dumbfounded to reply.

Sinnett’s old, tired voice drifted into a silence that could be felt. I turned to Dunlop for confirmation. He made a gesture of washing his hands of any responsibility; all he said was, “The damage has been done; there is nothing to gain by rehearsing it!” Although we met time and time again, he never afterwards referred to the incident.

I was to see Mr. Sinnett once again, a good many months later; it must have been in January 1918, as I was on leave from my battalion in France. He delivered a lecture, of which not one word remains with me, but it is well in my memory that I was called back from a waking dream to propose a vote of thanks. I referred to an article which I had recently read in a copy of *The Hibbert Journal* which I found in a dug-out on the Flanders front. It was called “Religion under Repair”, and must have been one of the last of his writings. Using this as the peg on which to hang my remarks I thanked him, not only for the lecture, but for his long service to the cause of Theosophy. He shook me by the hand as the meeting broke up, but did not say as much as one word. Perhaps he was reminded of the wrath to come for me,

and the world.

This is not the time nor the place to attempt to evaluate Sinnett’s contribution to Theosophy. After his breach with the Master K.H. and with H.P.B. he resorted to mediums and other dubious channels of communication in his desperate efforts to reopen communication with members of the Great White Lodge. He was firmly convinced that much of the occult information which he received came from the Master K.H. in person, but none of it carries the *insignia* of the writer of so many of the Mahatma Letters. His worst fault was that he was too much of the Pukka Sahib of Anglo-India in the last decades of the nineteenth century; his training and his physical make-up were such that he was unable to overcome them. He had many vicissitudes in his actual Theosophical career and Mrs. Besant used him for her own Theosophical political ends. Following the attempt to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in 1909, Mr. Sinnett, who had attended the enquiry in London in 1906, resigned from the T.S., as did G. R. S. Mead and many others. Actually, Mrs. Besant had demanded his resignation as Vice-President in 1907 when he stated, among other controversial matters, that he did not accept the genuineness of the astral Mahatmas who attended the dying Olcott at Adyar. However, under circumstances unknown to me at this distance, Sinnett rejoined the T.S. (Adyar) and Mrs. Besant jumped at the opportunity of reinstalling him as Vice-President.

In his old age, following some unlucky speculations, Mr. Sinnett was reduced to poverty. Mrs. Besant instituted a fund of 5000 pounds, which was subscribed in record time, and to which I was a subscriber. This was in 1921. Mr. Sinnett was deeply affected, but he did not live long to enjoy it; he died on June 27 of that year. He had “launched the barque of Theosophy on the Western Ocean of thought” and he had something of a Viking’s ending.

In this long retrospect I find it difficult

to place him accurately. He was given a magnificent opportunity which he failed to grasp; he mistook the shadow for the substance on many occasions later; he was one of those

“Who hold the written clue
To all save unwritten things,
And, half a league behind, pursue
The undoubted fact that flouts and
flings . . .”

We owe it to him, however, to be grateful for all that he did; we owe it to him to be very charitable indeed regarding those things wherein he failed. Across the Ocean of Death and this World I salute him, and hope that I may be worthy of working very much closer with him in those happier days which are not yet even a gleam of light on the horizon, in a world that is still in the womb of Time.

THE PROBLEM OF SEX

BY ALVIN BOYD KUHN

After listening to a spirited discussion, pro and con, of portions of the letter by George Cardinal Le Gros, printed in the Sept.-Oct. issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*, it seemed to me that the principles involved in the debate were of such weighty significance in occult philosophy as to demand further consideration. The chief deterrent to my attempting anything in this field is the knowledge that to support and justify what I feel should be said would require a fairly extended essay and not a simple brief reply to Mr. Les Gros' letter. I strongly feel that the question involves elements and principles of occult truth far more profound and recondite than just the simple idea that sex is bad and must be suppressed for the interests of the spiritual life.

It seems to be an assumption of general religion as well as of occult theory accepted almost with naivete, that sex indulged under its own natural motivations, even if the motive is specifically for procreation, is detrimental to the "spiritual life." In the general mind the almost universal posture toward sex is that it carries with it a stigma of degradation so marked indeed that it has become almost synonymous with the term "immorality." If some one is referred to as an immoral persons, the implied connotation is that he is leading a loose sexual life.

But much more unctuously it is in the field of religious interest that sex has been tabbed with its blackest contumely. The consensus of religious thought, one could truly say, has been overwhelmingly derogatory of sex throughout the centuries. The conception has held sway with little or no refutation at any time that the continued indulgence in sex is hostile to the paramount interests of the spirit, if indeed it does not threaten the soul's achievement of its liberation from bondage to the flesh and the consummation of its divine destiny. St. Paul's admonition to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" tersely states this cast of the religious mind. Paul further bewails the fact that he "perceives in his members a law which wars against the law of his mind and brings him into captivity to the law of sin and death," and he cries out for release from "the body of this death." For, he adds, "the interests of the flesh meant death; the interests of the spirit meant life and peace." These utterances of the great apostle have been largely responsible for the Western world's attitude toward sex. The position of Oriental religion hardly varies from this standard, indeed probably was the original source of it.

But it is when we come to the field of esoteric or occult philosophy and practice

that we find the aversion to sex taking its most virulent form. In some schools of sublimated spiritual cultism sex is held to be positively ruinous to the divine element in man's constitution. The expression of sex is held incompatible with the high interests of the spirit. To indulge in sex is to degrade the soul and to destroy its possibility of purification and flowering in spiritual glory.

The combined influence of all these postures in religion has deposited in the common mind the idea that sex is morally bad and spiritually perilous. Also the theological intimations of the Adam-Eve legend in *Genesis* have further deepened the persuasion that the indulgence of the first human pair in productive sex relations was the cause of man's "fall into sin" and his expulsion from Paradise. So that the general subconscious thought about sex in our civilization is that it is sinful *per se*.

So obsessive has been this idea of sex that human thinking on the matter has been warped out of normal channels into abnormal and eccentric views. Particularly the Western mind of our day has been conditioned to sex-sin-consciousness.

To some extent the attitude is understandable, in view of the situation in which the soul, migrating here from "heaven," finds itself in earthly incarnation. Transplanted here as seed-germ of a divine being, the potential soul of deity finds itself committed (a theologian would say "condemned") to procreate by physical sex like any animal. It is possibly to be granted that this falls upon the soul as a degradation from its spiritually pure state of consciousness; in a word it feels ashamed of its reduction to animalism. Yet the Christian Scriptures and theology carry the forthright declaration that the Son of God (our soul) took upon himself our human nature and "despised not the virgin's womb." If degradation was involved, both Christian and occult philosophy assert that it was voluntarily accepted by the Manasaputras. Why, then, rebel against what we willingly

undertook in our great mission to earth? Furthermore it must be logical to hold that God would not have asked, much less imposed on his Sons an evolutionary task that would have entailed for them actual degradation. In the occult tradition, incarnation involved some risk of loss of soul — Madame Blavatsky hints at this. But in the finale, if life in bodies on earth is itself not to be condemned as evil, the linkage of God's Son-souls must be regarded as, all in all, a salutary and beneficent aspect of evolutionary program and procedure, and not deplored as a miscarriage of divine design by "man's first disobedience," as Milton puts it.

The sense of "shame" of the procreative function and mechanism may indeed be traced to the childish immaturity of humanity. And the prospects are that the world today is beginning to emerge from that "squeamish" fixation, so that it can face up to the matter of sex with equable poise and sanity. The last sixty years have stabilized and sanified human feeling and thinking on that score, shall we say, happily. But what of the "occult" position? Is it not possible that it, too, needs sanification?

The strong anti-sex bias of so much "spiritual philosophy" never seems to have taken account of the question that is glaringly implicit in the premises of its position — why God should have made the natural method of human procreation a thing that is at the same time inherently hostile, injurious and degrading to the souls whose bodies must be generated for them by animal sex union. In asking his Sons to incarnate in animal bodies, God — we must think — neither could nor would couple their obedience to his command with a positive defilement of their nature or make it perilous to their eternal future. Occultists should face the obvious logic of this situation.

In that crucial seventh chapter of his *Epistle to the Romans*, expounding that the soul, in obeying the command to incarnate,

is assailed by "sin and death." Paul asks point-blank if the soul's coming under the law of the flesh is really "sin." And, for once in the range of religious literature we have the answer that has had so scant expression or recognition anywhere: the apostle shouts at us his answer: "God forbid!" The soul's immersion in body and its consequent submergence under the carnal nature, he declares, is not sin. And then he utters a truth that has to this day left the orthodox theologians staggered by its implications: "the law is holy, just and for our good." He urges us to "make use of this *good thing*." "Was then the law sin?" he asks. And another "God forbid!" is his ringing answer.

But protestation will swell in great volume that Paul decries without end our bent to succumb to the lusts of the flesh and sink into a welter of "concupiscence." What solves this apparent contradiction is the recognition that he means in the philosophical purview that the soul's union with body and the latter's subjection of soul to carnal impulse is quite in line with God's normal plan, but that to become enslaved to this bent and plunge immoderately into sexuality is definitely a hindrance to the welfare of the soul. Surely no one would infer that, because Paul proclaims the overall beneficence of the soul's incorporation in fleshly bodies, he is advocating for humans a life of free, wild, sensual licentiousness. One can uphold the good of incarnation without being charged with endorsing the potential evil that can and does arise from it. Paul leaves no one in doubt for a moment of his condemnation of the soul's yielding too easily to the animal propensities. The "miracle" of Jesus in walking on the water without sinking is the Bible's allegory of the soul's obligation to ensoul the body with its divine force, yet not to sink abjectly down under its elemental powers.

It begins to be apparent that occultism has envisaged the subject of sex with more of religious unctuousness than philosophical

discernment. The interweaving of sexual implications with the theological protestations of Adamic "sin" has tintured all religious attitudinism to sex with morbidity. It has made the Christian world, at any rate, ashamed of itself as to body, mating and procreation. And the sanity that could and should have normalized and cleared the human mind of the bogey of "shame" has defaulted because the whole subject has been viewed entirely apart from its philosophical foundations in the great fundamental law of *polarity*. The luminous understanding necessary for balanced views, will never be possible until the question is approached from the standpoint of the principles involved in polarity.

Occult thinking in the main recognizes, of course, that sex is one manifestation of the universal law of polarity, with the two poles, positive and negative, self-repellent but mutually attractive. But what occultism seems not to have done is to go with the implications that polarity predicates. These implications require that the disparagement of "inferior" and "superior" be eliminated and equality postulated. With this it is similarly imperative that the further and grosser disparagement of good for the one and evil for the other be erased. In the positive-negative relation of polarity each pole is absolutely equal in function and importance with its opposite. This is, as said, absolute, because the two are inseparable; neither can subsist apart from its tie-in with the other. If one could go out — fortunately it can not — the other would vanish with it. Even to suppose this severance is silly, because it is impossible. All "spiritual" aspiration has tended to think it can attain its high objectives by straining to lift itself clear of the soul's attachment to body and thus to release itself from the incubus of the flesh and float aloft in joyous freedom. It has been a fatuous delusion. The tension of the polarity is divinely designed to consummate all the beneficent purposes of God's great plan. Hence strenuous efforts to sever the

linkage of soul to body before the bodily leaf on the tree of life falls of its own accord in the autumn of the cycle, will be attended with peril. Not by fleeing from the attachment, but by union with its twin force, will the soul achieve its guerdon of development and final transfiguration, which it could not win in the dreamy bliss of heaven, and therefore had to be dispatched to earth to win it through polarized tension with the body. Not to him that entrances himself with mystical dreaming, but to "him that overcometh" have the Scriptures of ancient wisdom promised the seven great boons of evolution.

The function of sex, a *modus* designed by life to achieve its high objectives in creation, and pertaining immediately to the negative pole, must be sanely rated in relation to its role in the process. Sex is, so to say, an appurtenance of the body. It has a leading service to perform, in fact, one requisite for the very existence of the body itself. And here it seems to me, we face a feature of the problem that can be viewed with more "common sense" than has been used to explicate it hitherto. There are other functions of the body and bodily organs which are equally necessary for bodily existence and well-being. Let us look at just one of these — eating. This operation, for which distinctive organs have been developed, is a purely carnal function, and indeed for many as pleasurable an indulgence as sex. Yet common human ideation has never attached repugnance, moral quality, much less shame, to eating, — unless it is done piggishly. It is, as we say, morally amoral, neither good nor bad. Why, then, should the purely bodily function of sex be so singled out for the badge of shame and rated as besmirching the soul? Why can it not be characterized as good or evil, like eating, on the basis of proper moderation, proper relation to its purely physical ends, and be gauged on a scientific determination of the rules that govern its most efficient and beneficent functioning? The good or bad of eating is rated

on the balanced use or abuse of its function. It is not a thing of evil *per se*. Yet sex is rated as evil quite apart from its relation to its function. It is condemned even before it operates, and, what is more, even when it operates normally and happily. Not even good conduct disabuses it of sin.

Never, as far as I know, have religionists laid down one single scientific reason why sex is antithetical and injurious to the spiritual life. It had been gratuitously daubed with black color by the intimations of religious presuppositions. How can it be assumed that any purely bodily function is intrinsically detrimental to the soul? The soul has to have a body, in fact it has to create one for its evolutionary journey. The Egyptians called it the "boat of Horus," as they called the spiritual body the "ship of Ra." How can it be conceived that *any* essential function of this body should be inherently detrimental to the supreme interests of the soul? Yet a large segment of religious motivation over the centuries has centered about the delusion that the soul's great mission is most speedily and effectively advanced by crushing down the body. Mortify the flesh, crucify the body, shout religion, for the body is the enemy of the soul. Would the soul create its own enemy? So to save souls the Inquisitors simply removed the bodies — of millions.

The proper balanced philosophy pertaining to sex would then seem to be grounded on what a study of the subject in purely scientific fashion would yield as to the terms of the most salutary relation of sex to both bodily and spiritual welfare of the individual. Until a valid reason can be posited for proclaiming this bodily function detrimental to the soul, either with or apart from its influence upon the welfare of the body itself — and any bodily condition can effect the soul — the criterion for judging sex other than amorally must be established on the single ground of its physiological functionalism. It seems to me indisputably illogical to assume that God

would or could have made the procreation of his children, or their education on earth, for which bodies of animal provenance were necessary, contingent upon a methodology which would imperil or damage the soul itself. This would have been to commit, or condemn, them to an influence hostile, instead of propitious, to their mission and their well-being. This would be to argue that for their good he established a measure which would directly counter that good. It is admissible that he should employ a methodology which would demand great circumspection, care and great moderation and wisdom in its use by the creature. But that the exercise of the procreative mode should be *per se* detrimental to the soul does not seem permissible in the case. Sanity and logic demand that we should rate sex as altogether good in its place and function, a thing both marvelous and beneficent, man's sharing with the Father the work of creation, dowered by the Father with creative power, to be exercised with the highest degree of wisdom and for the Father's own increase in glory. Yet how seldom do we find any one lauding it as a thing of this magnificence! The dour gloom of religious morbidity has sullied its beauty and its wonder, so that it hides its head in the subterranean purlieus of man's dark subconscious world, and there breeds corruption of the life, as Freud has so startlingly made us aware. We have made it an outcast from normal recognition.

And undoubtedly all this macabre dishonor cast upon the function has taken its rise in the first place out of the warped theological assumption of the evil of life itself. From whatever original source it sprang, early in the theological development arose the persuasion that the migration of souls to earth was a sorry and a dismal necessity. To come down here was for souls to forsake edenic bliss and court mundane woe. The Greeks, following the earlier Egyptian Sages, called it a descent, a fall into generation, entailing a clipping of the wings of the spirit, an imprisonment

in the dungeon of the body, an entombment, an interment, a veritable "death" of the soul. Yet life ordains such an ordeal for every grain of wheat, for every seed that is to rise to the glory of fruit or flower. And shall we persist in saying that this is evil? "Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." And, says the great Plotinus: "It is not enough for the soul merely to exist; she must show what she is capable of begetting." Either life is good or it is evil; and if good, the means ordained for its propagation must be accounted good. God pronounced his work good; some cults of religionism flatly disagree with him. "To both Jainism and Buddhism," says Wendell Thomas in his book *Hinduism Invades America*, "life is a calamity to be avoided at all costs." Here is the nub of the whole question. If life is truly an evil dispensation, we should, with Hindu negativism, bewail the birth of every child.

Mr. Le Gros speaks of the soul's tenancy of the body as a dire duress which it will be unable to suffer overlong unless the human entity gives up its "allegiance to the animal nature." But isn't this saying that the higher self can not derive the benefit which life (God) designed it should gain from its polarized relation to body unless it gives up its polarity with the body? What strange logic it is that predicates blessedness on the earliest possible abandonment of the means designed for the achievement of that blessedness! Life uses the mode of polarity for the aggrandizement of its creatures. Presumably the relation will yield its benefits to all parties in the proper stage of their growth in the cycle, and the polarity will be dissolved, as return to the androgyne state is achieved. Then, of course, the soul will "give up its allegiance to the animal nature." Life has ordained it to come all in due and regular course. But why represent this as a desperate contingency, or a dire crisis, or deadly peril? This tie-in with the an-

imal nature, according to the Gospels and Christian theology, as well as to the ancient arcane science, was exactly what the Sons of God, the Agniswatha Pitris, the Mind-born, willingly took upon themselves as their great "sacrifice for sin." When will we come to understand all this scientifically as the beneficent ordinance of divine purpose and let go of the arrant misconception of the Adam-Eve allegory of a wreckage of God's design by man's yielding to the instinct for procreation?

All the phraseology used by Mr. Le Gros to characterize the tensions of the soul-and-body struggle, the Armageddon battle of the polarity, such as "conquer this demon," taking a "final do-or-die stand against this monster," this "abomination of dead Atlantis," are perallowable in the premises if you can at the same time steady your psychology with the assured knowledge that, as Paul says, "it is holy, just and for our good." To asseverate the beneficence of the incarnation experience does not blind the occult philosopher to the grim tenseness, the real Gethsemane anguish which the ordeal can take on at many crises along the road. Life is not exactly a pink tea or a joy ride. It is the birthing of the soul in and from the womb of the body, and this birth, too, has its labor pains. But through all its stresses and strains the soul at least can be cheered and heartened by the knowledge that the greater the pressure the richer the blessings. It should be axiomatic in occult science that no soul will be spared just that amount of tension and suffering necessary to cause it to exert itself sufficiently to bring to birth its divine potential.

No one will derogate the preachment of the urgency for serious effort on the part of the individual to bring the carnal passions under the control of the higher principles. This is part of the applied science of yoga, to be followed when the human realizes his need to take the mastery of his evolution intelligently into his own hands. It seems that occult students need to be

reminded that yoga means the "union of the above and the below" (quoting the Zohar's phrase), not up in super-areas of detachment, but right here in the flesh. "In my flesh shall I see God," shouts Job. And thrice-greatest Hermes likewise exclaims: "The kingdom of spirit has been embodied in my flesh." This is what the Lord's Prayer means in petitioning God to bring his kingdom of heaven down to earth.

Mr. Le Gros asks if it be not high time that we do something about this monster's throttling our young souls with his clammy tentacles of lust. He asks if we are not to study ourselves, "seeing this animal nature for what it is," and killing it out, as India exhorts us. If we take the shibboleth of Greek philosophy, "Man, know thyself," as true occult wisdom, surely we will grapple most strenuously with this mighty power God has placed in our hands. But for what motive? Summarily, ruthlessly to strangle it, stifle it, crush it out, drive it into the dark recesses of the subconscious? Even modern psychiatric science has pronounced against that folly, that danger. The voice of the ancient wisdom is clear on this score: the disciple of higher cultism is told to master the science of *union* of this power with the directive intelligence of the god-soul. Reason should dictate the preservation, not the destruction, of a principle or element of our nature which is to constitute actually one-half of our total complement of being. The soul came on earth for the purpose of utilizing the powers and properties of matter for the achievement of the ends of divine purpose. There is really no point in urging a mortal to grapple with this force, for grapple with it he will, willy-nilly. The point of moment is whether he grapples with it ignorantly, with no awareness of the significance of the struggle, no wisdom and understanding to counsel right action; or whether he makes the fight fortified with the occult knowledge that his task is not to kill the beast, but to tame its ferocity,

hold it in leash, then learn slowly to convert its surges of energy into agents of his intelligent aims and diviner aspirations. Has not the arcane science instructed us that our task with the sex force is to purify it, transmute it, sublimate it until it in the end transfigures us with a radiance of divine light?

If man is one-half angel and one-half brute, and the two are to woo, win and wed each other, if the Christ in us is to be born anew, then indeed they had better get acquainted with each other. The persuasion that we have to choke this demon to death has been the theological road-block to our recognition that in grappling with this "evil" power and "seeing it for what it is," we will be utilizing the very power that will divinize us. If the two powers pull far apart they will not be able to intercommunicate and interchange their natures. Neither can absorb what the other is designed to impart to it. The fecundating power of spirit must pierce clear to the heart of the atom of matter, if it is to lay hold of that mighty dynamism for purposes of *kriyashakti*. *Physis* can not perform its function of motherhood of the Christ aeon unless its potentiality be awakened and fertilized with the ray of the soul.

Mortal life is, or furnishes, the experience and training in the science of yoga. An ego whose eyes have been opened to the grim reality of the soul-body tension and its momentous issues, will, of course, study the nature of the two combatants and the terms of the conflict. But to beat the drums of alarm over the desperateness of the fight is about on a par with our working ourselves into a dither because a rosebud doesn't burst at once into the rose, or in childing a young oak sapling for not desperately hurrying on to become the woodland giant. Is anything to be gained for the spiritual life by our indulging in wild wishful thinking that drives us to ask how long souls at their present stage and status of development must grovel, spell-

bound "before the dazzling jewel of Mara," and to assert with a great flourish of assurance that we should right now be tens of thousands of years beyond this stage in our evolution, already having unified our lower natures with the god within us? One must ask on what authority Mr. Le Gros makes a statement of this categorical nature? Is it not a sheer wild fling of guessing to state that the train of evolution on this planet is fifty thousand years behind time? How could any one know?

Then the contributor in his final sentence, suddenly abandons his viewing with alarm and cuts the ground from under all his solicitude over the soul's dallying unduly long under the seductions of sense and sex, when he assures us that fighting and unconquerable beside the spiritual battler stands the Divine Warrior and that victory is certain. Then why worry?

At the very time that I had begun the composition of this article, what should come to hand but the October issue of the *Toronto Theosophical News*, giving a quotation from the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 448), as follows:

"In human nature, evil demotes only the polarity of Matter and Spirit, a 'struggle for life' between the two manifested Principles in Space and Time, which Principles are one per se, in as much as they are rooted in the Absolute. In Cosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which, being mutually interdependent, are necessary to each other 'in order that both should live.' If one should be arrested, the action of the other would become immediately self-destructive."

Searching for another passage in which H.P.B. states that spirit and matter are twins, the progeny of one mother, my eye catches a sentence (I, 449) which I am impelled to cite here: "When spirit has penetrated every minutest atom of the seven principles of Kosmos. . . ." Occult study renders us an ill service if it makes

us so impatient with normal evolutionary progress that we cannot complacently give spirit adequate time in which to consummate the stupendous task of transmuting unconscious matter into conscious glory. Souls migrate to earth to work a wondrous miracle upon matter. The sentence partially just quoted carries to me the message of attachment rather than detachment. How are we to have *union* of the two great powers if we strain to tear the two violently apart, trampling the one underfoot and sending the other rocketing aloft to empty space? We must match the equilibrium of nature with the balance in our philosophy.

PRACTICAL OCCULTISM

In her article "Practical Occultism" which along with other articles is published in a small book bearing the same title, H.P.B. draws attention to the difficulties which confront would-be disciples who were born and bred in Western lands and who, from earliest childhood have been under the influence of a strongly individualistic attitude. She points to the spirit of ambition, the desire to outstrip others and to other qualities which tend to develop self-centredness.

In contrast she quotes a few of the "private rules" which "give an approximate idea of the conditions under which alone the study of Divine Wisdom can be pursued with safety, that is, without the danger that the Divine will give place to Black Magic."

"The disciples while studying must take care to be united as the fingers of one hand. Thou shalt impress upon their minds that whatever hurts one should hurt the others, and if the rejoicing of one finds no echo in the breasts of others, then the required conditions are absent, and it is useless to proceed."

"None can feel the difference between himself and his fellow-students, such as, 'I am the wisest', 'I am more holy and pleasing to the teacher, or in my community than my brother' etc.—and remain a disciple. His thoughts must be predom-

inately fixed upon his heart, chasing therefrom every hostile thought to any living being. It (the heart) must be full of the feeling of non-separateness from the rest of beings as from all Nature; otherwise no success can follow."

"Meditation, abstinence, the observation of moral duties, gentle thoughts and kind words, as goodwill to all and entire oblivion of self, are the most efficacious means of obtaining knowledge and preparing for the reception of higher wisdom."

H.P.B. also points out that "It is impossible to employ spiritual forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in the operator. For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane and dire results may be produced by it."

The tenor of the rules confirms the age-old teaching that a man or woman who aspires to that completion of consciousness which is called Enlightenment or Realization, must break through and destroy for ever, the narrow walls of personality-centred life. The Universal cannot be imprisoned within the cell of the little self. To know this mentally is not enough. The test comes in action. How do we act when a crisis arises? Do the instinctive reactions of the animal surge forward, and do we defend ourselves with tooth and claw and ferocious cunning—or do we pause and invoke the powers of selfishness, compassion and wisdom?

For each of us, our theosophy must become a permanent attitude towards life, an attitude which is reflected in our whole being. Mental acceptance is not sufficient; we cannot be theosophists in our minds and predatory animals in our feelings. Compassion, self-forgetting love for all beings, must predominate if we would learn the elementary lessons of the Ancient Wisdom. As St. Paul said, "Though I know all mysteries and all learning, but have not the Love-that-truly-serves, I am as nothing."

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