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## THEOSOPHY - A FIXED AND DEFINITE SYSTEM?

I do not remember any other article in our magazine, or any other Theosophical magazine, which has aroused as much attention as Dr. W. E. Wilks' "Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy?" Several letters of comments have been published, and the article has been referred to in the official journals of other National Societies. Mr. Sri Ram's editorial in *The Theosophist* is being re-printed herein as well as a report of a panel discussion held by Hamilton Lodge. Miss Zahara, General Secretary, Australia, had an editorial in the latest issue of the Sectional magazine, and the current issue of *The American Theosophist* carried an editorial by Dr. Henry Smith, General Secretary. We should be grateful to Dr. Wilks for having raised this challenging issue.

The discussion will doubtless lead to a clarification of thought concerning the issue, and this will be useful, provided that in our anxiety to draw sharp distinctions between Theosophy and what is called Neo-Theosophy, we are not led by degrees into establishing, even unofficially, a code of teachings labelled Theosophical. This is the grave danger to the Society against which H.P.B. warned future members. Her often-quoted words are:

"Every such attempt as the Theosophical Society has hitherto ended in failure, because, sooner or later, it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard-and-fast dogmas of its own, and so lost by imperceptible de-

grees that vitality which living truth alone can impart."

Certainly *The Secret Doctrine* does contain specific teachings on certain aspects of Theosophy—the unity of all life, the divinity of man, reincarnation, karma and so on. At present, it is agreed that such teachings, even though they are accepted by the majority of members, should not be adopted as a fixed code. But what of the future? If the time ever comes when *The Secret Doctrine*, and it alone, is regarded as our Holy Book, our Bible of Theosophy, and a set of ideas drawn therefrom is gradually adopted as a Theosophical belief, the Society will be well on its way toward sectarianism.

It is partly because of this possible danger that I am unable to agree that Theosophy should be called a definite philosophy. The words are doubtless intended to mean "a clear-cut system of thought" and not "a limited love of truth" which they might if the original meanings were followed. But is Theosophy merely another system of thought? For me it is not, as it embraces many elements beyond the intellectual and these elements render a hard-and-fast definition of Theosophy impossible.

Without being regarded as a holy and therefore untouchable book, *The Secret Doctrine* and allied writings is our chief source of information about Theosophy in this cycle and the teachings therein are the guideposts, the charts, by which we plot

our courses—and by which we learn to avoid the shoals of other systems of thought. These writings carry their own internal authority, and as a student becomes familiar with such writings, he learns to respect that authority.

H.P.B. has said that *The Secret Doctrine* does not contain the whole of Theosophy, only those fragments of Theosophical teachings which could be enunciated in this cycle. Theosophy itself might be said to be that vast body of truths concerning the nature of man and the universe which has

existed from time immemorial and has been the heritage of mankind from earliest ages. It is preserved in the ancient records of races long preceding ours, it is to be found in the philosophies, religions, sciences, mystical systems and the arts of antiquity. Until we know Theosophy in all its vastness and in its myriad implications, can we, as humble students of that great body of Truth, ask where its boundaries lie and whether it is a fixed and definite system?

D.W.B.

## A REPLY TO "IS THEOSOPHY A DEFINITE PHILOSOPHY?"

BY N. SRI RAM

Our President's comments are reprinted from

"On the Watch-Tower", *The Theosophist*, April 1962.

Mr. W. E. Wilks of Orpheus Lodge, Vancouver, has contributed an article to *The Canadian Theosophist* of January-February 1962, under the caption "Is Theosophy a definite philosophy?" in which he controverts at length what he considers to be the "Adyar T.S. attitude towards Theosophy". When he uses the word "Adyar," what he refers to is that group or band at the international headquarters of the Society who give the lead to the members at large, those at Adyar—the President and the rest—by whom the members allow themselves to be influenced. He dwells on the past, the "Neo-Theosophy," as he calls it, of Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, giving to events that took place in their days his own interpretation, on some points making rather general statements presumably on hearsay, as for instance, the statement that "H.P.B.'s books were backshelved and members refused access to them". I find it difficult to think that this could have happened at any time. But if Mr. Wilks has come across such a case, surely it should not be fathered upon that

continuing but, I am afraid, rather mystical entity, "Adyar".

Coming to the present, with which all of us are particularly concerned, I am myself not aware of any serious question as to whether Theosophy is something definite or not. It is as definite as Truth. But then, what is the nature of the Truth which is Theosophy? Mr. Wilks quotes the following sentences from a speech by myself at the last South Indian Conference at Adyar:

"Our understanding of Theosophy constantly changes as we grow and mature. In fact, I would say that the longer one is in the Theosophical movement, the more difficult it is to say what Theosophy is, because first of all, it is so subtle; secondly, it is profound; and thirdly, it is all-embracing and comprehensive."

Although a year has passed since these words were spoken, and I myself must have matured a little more during that period (let us hope so), I see no reason to retract these words. Mr. Wilks considers this is tantamount to saying "Theosophy is what each one thinks it is." If each one identifies

Theosophy with his own pet ideas, then obviously there will be no common ground among the so-called Theosophists, and the whole activity of the Society would be self-cancelling, if not a chaos of uncoordinated energies seeking diverse tangential outlets. I agree with Mr. Wilks that Theosophy is not—like the idea of God—what anyone may imagine it to be. Yet it is the Divine or godly wisdom, which in its higher, subtler aspects and its inmost essence, is incapable of definition by words possessing for us an objective and known significance.

If Theosophy is to be identified with Truth, that Truth must comprehend not merely the concrete and the well-understood aspects of the universe, including man, but also the intangible, the infinite Spirit that manifests itself in concrete forms, and the diverse play of consciousness in the psychic and intellectual aspects that are intermediary between Spirit and matter. The comprehension of the nature of Life and Consciousness, without which what we call Theosophy would be but a dead letter or shell, requires a different approach from merely accepting what one may be told, holding on to and propagating certain statements, however valuable and important these statements might appear to be. Truth in all its vastness and beauty, that Truth which is in Nature, in life, in the universe, cannot be comprehended except by an open inviting mind, free and sensitive in every part of it, in the entirety of its texture. Granted the preciousness and the importance of individual freedom for the experiencing of truth, there is no sense in declaring, indeed it would be a contradictory proceeding to set forth, a number of propositions, and affirm that this, and nothing but this, can be called Theosophy. Such propositions would be like neat little squares, true enough perhaps at a certain level, but severally and in their sum they would fail to square the infinite circle or any other circle.

If Theosophy were so purely objective a doctrine and so fixed a thing, as the creeds

of the churches are usually regarded, the first Object of the Theosophical Society, or at least the second, should have been "To study Theosophy as set forth in such and such books". But except in the name of the Society, the word "Theosophy" does not occur in its Objects, as formulated. The three Objects lay down, first, a certain outlook, a way of life, which is Brotherhood, and secondly certain lines of study and investigation covering the already known and the unknown. Evidently it was thought, when the Objects were framed, that this would result in the discovery or appreciation of Truth, that it would be, in effect, the pursuit of Theosophy. Along this approach, we cannot correctly speak of "Theosophy's teachings," which would amount to saying "Truth's teachings". Theosophy is not an entity or system separate from the truth which we seek to discover or understand and express. The teaching of the Adepts is the statement of the truth, not the whole truth, but as much of it as They thought it advisable to give also as much as could be stated in recognizable words.

The Buddha gave His teaching, important aspects of which are as pertinent today as ever before and will bear study and attention in our Theosophical meetings and expositions, but He compared His teachings to a handful of leaves out of a whole forest. However much we may prize H.P.B.'s works and the *Mahatma Letters*, they give but an outline, fragmented in part. It would be fatal to the development of the Society to regard them as the orthodox Musalman regards the Koran: Nothing can be true, which is not verbally in it already. It is only a free, flexible and intuitive mind, which can appreciate and experience the essential truth even in the *Mahatma Letters* and *The Secret Doctrine*, and assign to the various statements in Theosophical (or any other) literature their relative and proper significance, not exalting statements of secondary or even superficial importance into unalterable dogmas.

The article referred to makes much play

with the word "Neo-Theosophy," meaning by it a "variant of Theosophy," not the original brand. Anything new, however profoundly grounded in Truth, any new way of looking at things, at man, life and the universe, with perhaps a greater sensitiveness and therefore also with a different feeling and in an altered perspective, can be dismissed as a variation, under that rather condemnatory term. If it be argued that the new statement may be true but is not Theosophy, then we are not equating Theosophy with the limitless Truth, but with certain verbal statements in particular books, as comprehended by us.

H.P.B. herself, in *Key to Theosophy*, has given us a warning against those tendencies which in the past have caused "every such attempt as the Theosophical Society" to end in failure, "because, sooner or later it has degenerated into a sect, set up hard and fast dogmas of its own and so lost by imperceptible degrees that vitality which living truth alone can impart." She said that though "technical knowledge of the esoteric doctrine," as found in the books, had its great importance, something besides a n d more was needed for the Society's progress. Differences in approach and ideas are on the same level as differences that might exist among scientists as to nuclear particles. We accept the authority of those whom we regard as eminent in this branch of Science regarding such matters; but it would be entirely contrary to the scientific spirit and not conducive to progress if we did not permit others, whether men of Science or laymen, to consider variations on their views, to propound other hypotheses. They must have the freedom to do so, even as Einstein felt free to expound his theories, though they were completely at variance with the orthodox theories of Science at that time.

In the Society there should not be any question of using tactics to promote certain views and downgrade others, but we should let all ideas, all approaches, have their proper expression, in the firm belief

that Truth will prevail. Differences in approach and ideas are to be welcomed in so far as they are evidence of freedom of thought, understanding and research; but permitting that freedom, the Society should be able to preserve that which is of vital importance. What is vital is freedom and that which can be grasped only by a mind and heart that is free within itself.

To sum up the essential truth in Mr. Wilks' position and what I have attempted to say, Truth is the order and nature of things that exist and take place. Theosophy, though literally a Wisdom, has to be identified with this Truth. Therefore Theosophy is something that exists in its own right; it is not what may be imagined by anyone, which imagination is generally according to one's background and conditioning. The Mahatmas, and H.P.B. under Their inspiration and guidance, have stated the truth about the universe and man, to the extent that those aspects of that truth which are capable of being expressed in words or as a concrete pattern could be put before the public. But neither the *Mahatma Letters*, which They themselves thought were confusing as they stood, nor H.P.B.'s writings nor any other writings would help us to the essential truth and the vastness of it, if they are set up as a Bible. Nor should the words Theosophy and Truth be limited to them or to any other books that exist, for Truth is infinite; it is rooted in Life which is immeasurable and inexhaustible. There can be an ever-fresh blossoming of that Truth in the individual heart and mind, and an ever-new revelation of it, so far as it can be revealed.

What is needed in a Society, seeking to comprehend and proclaim the Divine Wisdom is, on the part of the student, a spirit of humility that recognizes his own limitations, the absence of any desire to dogmatize, and a willingness to receive fresh light from every new or different point of view. Without this the Society will crystallize in its tracks and gradually be bled of its vitality. It is only the free mind, un-

burdened and pure, that can receive the Truth, which exists in many dimensions, spiritual, intellectual and material, which can also perceive the truth in any particular statement, whether ancient or modern. The freedom to which I refer is not freedom to fancy anything that one wishes or is prompted to embrace, but freedom from all likes and dislikes, from all pre-determining factors. In such a state of mind, Truth does not need to be imposed—I doubt if it ever can be, except as make-believe—but there will be a genuine response to the truth that is presented. It is the capacity, at least on the part of a section of members, to respond to the Truth, whatever the form it may wear, whatever the new note or melody it may utter in accordance with the needs of the times, which will enable the Society to go forward, to burgeon forth with renewed life and vigor.

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### HAMILTON LODGE DISCUSSES THE QUESTION

A few weeks after the receipt of the Jan.-Feb. issue of *The Canadian Theosophist*, Hamilton Lodge held a panel discussion on the article by Dr. W. E. Wilks, published under the heading "Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy?" The panel moderator was Mrs. Harold Lomas, and those taking part were R. M. Stevens, G. Bush and M. Carr. Each question had reference to a specific quotation from the letter.

Q: "One can never say 'This is Theosophy, this is not'." Please say what you think Theosophy is.

R.S.: Since Theosophy is Life and the Story of Life in the universe and in particular this world of ours, we can say that any system of thought can, in a sense, be called Theosophy, and that nothing of Life can be said to be 'not Theosophy'.

G.B.: When we use the word Theosophy we should clarify as to whether we are referring to the Theosophical Society as such, or to the teachings of H.P.B. If we are referring to the Society, then the answer

must be "No" as it has no creed nor dogma and refuses to hold itself up as a judge of the validity of the opinions of others. If we are referring to the teachings of H.P.B., then the answer is "Yes", Theosophy is a definite philosophy and has a distinct body of teachings. I think the confusion on this question stems from failure to clarify in which frame of reference the term "Theosophy" is being used.

M.C.: I think there is a distinct body of teachings known to the Great Ones. Like all truth, its presentation becomes distorted as succeeding generations of students attempt to understand, explain and propound it.

Q: What is Neo-Theosophy?

R.S.: Having been accused of having the tinge of Neo-Theosophy at one time, I can only say that some must arrive at 'Direct' Theosophy by way of explanations used in Neo-Theosophy. The symbols remain the same, the explanations of them differ.

G.B.: As the term is generally used in the Society, it refers to the teachings of the Besant-Leadbeater group who after H.P.B.'s death attempted to influence the direction of the thinking of the Society away from the teachings of H.P.B. and W. Q. Judge. The Judge faction remained loyal to H.P.B.'s teachings without additional embellishments. Besant and Leadbeater claiming special revelation, promulgated many teachings, that were at direct variance to the teachings of H.P.B. and were labelled "neo-theosophists".

M.C.: Neo-Theosophy is an attempt at simplifying or watering-down the Theosophical teachings. Each of the variants has been started by someone who read the Blavatsky writings, and undertook to make them easier for other students to understand. Often these supposedly simplified teachings are at variance with or even opposed to the teachings of the Masters and H.P.B.: There is in existence a compilation of teachings, with H.P.B. and the Masters in one column and Neo-Theosophy on the same points, in the other column.

Q: "H.P.B.'s books not made available". Is this true?

G.B.: The Canadian lodges that I have visited, make available in abundance, the writings of H.P.B. I cannot speak for other sections except to refer to the letter to the editor in the March-April Canadian Theosophist which points out that they have never been suppressed in the English section either.

M.C.: They have always been available in the Canadian Section, and in various lodges in other sections, but I have long understood that they were kept in the background at Adyar, and in many of the sections.

Q: Is it very important that a student should at all times know whether he is studying Theosophy or some comment on or variant of Theosophy?

G.B.: It would not be fair for a student to make an assessment of the value of the teachings of H.P.B., unless he has made his study directly from her works. It is fine to study commentary as long as he realizes it for what it is. It would be unfair to judge her teachings on the basis of some other individual's interpretation of them. We do not mean to say that these commentaries and interpretations are not helpful to the student if they are recognized for what they are.

M.C.: It is important because we are a body of truth-seekers and we will come nearer to the real truth by studying the teachings of the Great Ones who know, than we will if we take a second, third or fourth hand interpretation. If you study Neo-Theosophy you should know it so that you can compare it with the real thing.

Q: What are the sinister powers which Dr. Wilks says both the Mahatmas and H.P.B. declare are always on the lookout where the aspiration for the enlightenment of mankind exists, in order to oppose and distort its operation, and deflect it from its purpose?

G.B.: There are innumerable evil entities, both incarnate and discarnate which

would dearly love to deter the aspirations for the enlightenment of mankind if they could, for their own selfish ends and purposes, chief of which is to increase their own power and influence for selfish ends at the expense of others. These influences can and do effect us on the physical, emotional and mental levels and must be overcome as the student progresses, otherwise they will prove a stumbling block. On the other hand no individual progress can be made without something to overcome, and thus they may prove a blessing in disguise.

M.C.: Our own faults and failings do plenty in that direction, but apparently there are beings whose aim is to prevent enlightenment. Some of them may be incarnated, others may not, but still have the ability to affect mankind adversely.

Q: Do "priests and bishops enter and take high office in the T.S., not as individual students, but preferentially as priests and bishops"? Does or did this ever happen.

R.S.: The Theosophical Society is, in general principle, and should be, opposed to ecclesiastical hierarchies in the Society because of the necessity of individual responsibility of the soul. This is one of the basic precepts of the Society, and to my mind one of the main reasons for the formations of the Society in the West in 1875.

G.B.: Priests and Bishops are a sop for the unenlightened individual who is mentally lazy or intellectually unevolved, or who is not sufficiently interested or concerned with this development to attempt to find the answers for himself. There is no place in the T.S. for such as these, as there are a hundred and one church denominations to suit their needs. Therefore in the T.S. we have no place for priests and bishops who hold themselves above the individual student. We do not mean that one student cannot learn from another, however.

M.C.: There was organized by T.S. members the Liberal-Catholic church. It was a separate organization, but the priests and bishops were prominent members of the Adyar Theosophical Society. Branches of

this church spread in various countries and some are still active.

Q: What are the Mahatma Letters?

G.B.: These are letters apparently written to A. P. Sinnett by the Tibetan Masters Koot Hoomi and Morya, the teachers of H.P.B. for his personal instruction and to clarify doubtful points for him. They were for his personal use and were never intended to be published. However they did appear in print after his death, under the title *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*.

M.C.: The volume is composed of copies of letters written by the two Masters of H.P.B., to A. P. Sinnett, an active Theos-

ophical student. After the latter's death, a Mr. Barker of England compiled and published the volume in 1923.

Q: Is Theosophy a Definite Philosophy?

R.S.: Meaning of the word 'Theosophy' is the "Wisdom of God". The meaning of 'Philosophy' is "a love of wisdom". Since most people are in the Society, or attend its meetings, because of their love of wisdom or truth, and because a philosopher cannot exist without wisdom, the two words are co-relative, and Theosophy must be a definite philosophy.

Mabel Carr

## WHAT THE MASTERS TEACH

BY CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

*A Shortened version of a Talk  
at 50 Gloucester Place on January 28, 1962*

The Masters here referred to are those known in the Theosophical Movement as the Masters of Wisdom. This phrase implies three things, that there is such a Wisdom, that there are adepts of that Wisdom, and that they teach it to those who can be trusted to use it wisely in the interests of mankind.

Now Theosophy knows no authority for any teaching; it has no Revelation, no Saviour and no Elect. In Theosophy, as in one of its greatest presentations, Buddhism, the final word is that of the Buddha to his disciples: "Work out your own salvation, with diligence." It follows that the presentation of any teaching about the Masters and their Wisdom must be reasonable and not dogmatic. The only premises in my observations are that man is a mixture of God-animal, that the two forces are at war within him and that the faculty of mind in which the war rages has itself two distinct powers, that of the intellect, of thought, and that of the intuition, by which alone man knows Reality. The distinction between

knowledge gained by the intellect and Wisdom gained through the intuition is here important. In the long pilgrimage of man from the unmanifest Absolute, into the depths of matter, and thence home to the Unmanifest, and spiritual leaders of the race at any one time learn more and more about the Universe, about Self, and the intimate relation between them.

### Preservation of Wisdom

This knowledge is not lost, but stored for succeeding generations. Some is in books, though often in "lost" languages; some is preserved in memory and handed down from teacher to pupil. But some is so dangerous in the hands of ignorant or evil men that it is "stored" in glyph and symbol, even as the scientists' formulae of today preserve great knowledge in a form which only the initiated can read. But whereas scientific knowledge is objective, the most important knowledge to preserve is that about the mind itself, and this implies the development of powers and faculties, whether high or low, in the individ-

ual mind. In other words, the student of the Wisdom must be more than scholar; he must develop, however slowly, extra-normal powers, and because something of a mystic, with extra-normal awareness of the "Buddha within." These powers each man acquires by himself; none gives him them. By them he tests the discoveries of all preceding men, and then he applies them to the spiritual progress of mankind.

Knowledge so gained, by interior development, external study and application, when ratified by the intuition becomes Wisdom. But Wisdom cannot be so lightly stored. It cannot be expressed in formulae; strictly speaking, it cannot be expressed. ("The Tao that can be expressed it not the eternal Tao.") Hence the necessity of rediscovery, new attainment by each pupil before he becomes in turn a Master of the Wisdom he has found. Yet a body of such Masters can be said collectively to be the Guardians of such Wisdom, and they can, when the pupil is ready, in a mysterious sense transmit it to one who has earned the right to demand it.

### The Heritage of Mankind

This "accumulated Wisdom of the ages, tested and verified by generations of Seers," is the heritage of mankind—as preserved and guarded by the few. The knowledge gained, of the manifold planes of manifestation of the universe and their relationship, of the equivalent planes and qualities in man, the cosmos in miniature, becomes when tested by the awakened faculties of each new aspirant for adeptship, Wisdom, and therefore part of the Wisdom of which the great ones of mankind are masters. These powers of the awakened mind are themselves manifold. Some are of the psychic plane, known nowadays as ESP—extra-sensory perception. These, though spectacular in operation to the ignorant, are of little value on the Way, and their possession, proving too often the source of boastful pride in their possessor, is best ignored, or used but secretly with the purest of motives. The higher powers are vast

in diversity and range, and indeed, where do they end? The inner eye of the seer can be used as a microscope or as a telescope; the laws of nature are found to be living laws that can be manipulated and wisely used, as with the hundred forms of what we now call electricity. Mind is indeed proved lord over matter; thought is used as an objective power to which space is of no account. Men who have reached this advanced level are so far lords of life that they are lords of death, and can pass from birth to birth in full consciousness.

Why, then do they not use the cosmic forces at their command to save mankind from its burden of self-wrought suffering? Because these Masters themselves are bound by laws, though we know but little of their nature. They have told us that none of this force may be wasted, nor the slightest use of it abused. They may influence men for the better, in groups or as individuals, but not even a Master, not the Buddha himself, can intervene between cause-effect, or save any man from the consequences of his own ignorance. They teach why this action has that effect, but the individual must, under the immutable law, none the less "work out his own salvation—with diligence."

This Wisdom, then, must be consolidated, extended, guarded, and applied as is permitted, by nature's own laws, for the benefit of mankind. This teaching is best exemplified in Mahayana Buddhism. Prajna/Karuna are the two sides of a coin. Prajna, the Wisdom, is not such until applied in Karuna, Compassion; and Compassion is blind unless her hands are guided by Wisdom.

### The Guardian Hierarchy

The Guardians must themselves be of Master-rank; so much is obvious, and the Buddhist would claim them all as Bodhisattvas, those who have taken the Vow to forgo all reward for attainment, even Nirvana, "until the last blade of grass has entered into Buddha-hood." It follows, surely, that those whom they choose to



teach are of the same compassionate mind.

But Masters are not all of one rank or achievement. There is a hierarchy of grandeur among these Teachers of mankind. At the head is the Buddha, "the greatest as the holiest man that ever lived" as the Master K.H. called him. Below him are great ones known by many names. The Buddhists call them Arhats and Bodhisattvas; the Hindus call them Rishis and Mahatmas; the Tibetans know them as High Incarnations. In the Western tradition, which stems from the Middle East, they have been known as Hierophants, Magi, Prophets or just as Initiates. Among themselves they are the Brothers. All have their Chelas, pupils, chosen from those who by their own efforts have claimed a Master's attention as being fruitful material in helping them to help mankind. These accepted Chelas have their own chelas. There have been lay chelas, helping as they can but without taking vows or leaving the world. Great men, with noble ideas for helping humanity have been inspired to their vocation; societies and groups working unselfishly are helped by many means, so far as their karma allows. But no man is recognized as of chela quality until he has by his own efforts largely conquered the claims of self, developed his intuition, and dedicated the greater part of his working day, intelligently and usefully, to the service of mankind. Meanwhile the Masters and their pupils travel the earth as situations have need of them, striving to offset the powers of the masters of evil, and teaching wherever an intuitive mind is awake to the Wisdom.

### An Unique Attempt

From time to time they attempt a movement among men on a large scale. The last such effort was made, they say, in 1875, when H. P. Blavatsky, H. S. Olcott and W. Q. Judge founded The Theosophical Society, to study and teach the Knowledge given them, to develop their own powers to reach the Wisdom, and among men to form a nucleus of the brotherhood of man-

kind. The Masters primarily responsible for this unique attempt are known to us as Koot Hoomi (K.H.) and Morya (M), who was the Master of H. P. Blavatsky, and but for them there would be no such movement as Theosophy today. H.P.B., as she was affectionately known, was taught by her Master in Tibet. Later, under his guidance, she gave the world the greatest volumes extant of the Wisdom, *The Secret Doctrine*, an outline, yet a full one, of the whole process of cosmogenesis and anthropogenesis by which the Unmanifest breathes outward into the realm of matter and then returns. A second work, *The Key to Theosophy*, put some of these principles in the form of question and answer; a third is a translation of extracts from a scripture of Tibetan Buddhism, surely one of the most spiritual books ever published, the *Voice of the Silence*. The same Masters wrote to an Englishman working in India, A. P. Sinnett, who, from their letters, now in the British Museum, compiled *Esoteric Buddhism* and other works, the letters themselves being available in volume form as *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*. W. Q. Judge wrote from the same material the *Ocean of Theosophy*. These works should be studied by all who wish to know what is Theosophy. This is "Theosophy"; what differs may be true, but it is not "Theosophy". Study, then, these works with the intuition, on their own and not on the psychic or even the intellectual plane; and then apply them.

What, then, is the Wisdom in the hands of its Guardians, who themselves are Masters of it? Its supreme quality is that it is much more than a mere collection of doctrines, it is an evolving, living Whole, as alive as the universe which is its visible expression. This Wisdom, for the moment called by the ancient name of Theosophia, the Wisdom of the Gods, is itself total, and the advanced ones of mankind have built up profound knowledge of its range and grandeur. It lives, and each principle or part of it lives, as powerful in the mind as the Niagara Falls in nature. Each principle

is but an aspect of this Whole, and the Whole is an expression of the All-Mind of manifestation, of which yours and mine are part. What the Masters know of it forms a complete exposition of Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis, the coming-to-be and the ceasing-to-be of the universe, and of Man as the universe in miniature. Some of this outline, a sketch of a vast panorama, was given to the world last century through the writings of the Masters themselves, and their pupil, H. P. Blavatsky. Such, I repeat is Theosophy. All later commentary and exposition is but such, and where it differs from the Masters' Teaching it should not be called by that name.

Omnipresent, Eternal . . .

Beyond all imagining is THAT, Parabrahman, the "Godhead" of Eckhart which is "beyond God". This is the "Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible . . . It is beyond the range and reach of thought." So H.P.B. describes it in the Proem to her *Secret Doctrine*, and I find it difficult to see how anyone can be a genuine student of Theosophy who has not studied the Proem deeply again and again. From time to time, in a rhythm of periodicity which staggers our thought with a cycle of fifteen digits of our years, THAT breathes out and what we call ONE is born. The One trembles into twoness, and the basic duality of manifestation is born, "absolute, abstract Space and absolute, abstract Motion"; matter as the body of Spirit, Life in ever-changing Form. This out-breathing and in-breathing, this endless process of One, Two, Three, which is not Creation for it lacks a Creator, this coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be is the formula of the birth-death of every form, whether universe, planetary chain, a single globe or man. And the process makes a pattern. Moving in circles yet, in diagramatic form, "up and down," the circles become spirals, the double movement going on unceasingly. "As above, so below" in circles and cycles great and small, where time and space as

we know them have but relative meaning, in every littlest unit of life is Life, and there is no thing dead. One Life, illimitable forms, and in every form a septenary subdivision with limitless sub-divisions, and between all levels of each seven-fold form a correspondence and interdiffusion of relationship throughout the universe. What a concept, what a Plan! No known religion retains more than a fragment of it in its teaching, though all the Schools of the Wisdom make it clear that they hold at least some knowledge of it for the benefit of the few found worthy to receive it.

And man, like all other forms is seven-fold in nature, God in an animal, the Divine confined in a series of vehicles of expression on the descending planes. Atman, the ray of the Godhead, the Light of THAT, exists in man but he knows it not; it is "the Buddha within" which each must find and ultimately re-become. Its human vehicle is Buddhi, the intuition, the faculty by which we know Truth, as distinct from knowing about it. Then comes Manas, the mind, at once the veil and the instrument of Buddhi. It is dual, as we all know, the higher aspect being drawn up to its father Spirit, and the lower pulled down by Kama, the desires of the selfish, lower self in all of us; and this desire, as the Buddha taught, is the cause of most of our human suffering. Lower still than Kama is the humanized life-principle or Prana which infuses every atom of our being, and gives life to the final pair of principles, the astral or counterpart body of dense matter which is the template or mould on which is built the densest vehicle of all, the body as we know it. These principles apply to a universe or man, and at the death of any form the same process is involved. When the physical body dies (from too much Life) it is burnt. Prana, the life-force returns to its cosmic source and in-forms new bodies. The principle of Kama forms for a while a separate "body" and fools the credulous with seance-room appearance. Then

(Continued on page 69)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the recent deaths of two old members of Toronto Lodge, Mrs. Florence Parker and Mrs. Daisy Mackay.

Mrs. Parker, who joined the Toronto Lodge in 1945, died on April 24 in her 84th year after a lengthy illness which prevented her from attending the Lodge for several years. A Theosophical funeral service was held on April 26.

Mrs. Mackay died in her 98th year on May 19. Mrs. Mackay became a member of the Theosophical Society on June 29, 1904 in Vancouver, her certificate of membership being signed by Alexander Fullerton who became General Secretary of the American Section after the schism of 1895. Mrs. Mackay was doubtless our oldest member, not only in years of age but also in length of membership in the Society. She and her sister, Miss Winterbottom, were very active workers in Toronto Lodge for many years following 1917, but later, illness and advancing years made it impossible for her to come to the Lodge meetings. A Theosophical funeral service was held on May 22 and was attended by members from Toronto Lodge and from the Blavatsky Lodge of the Canadian Federation of Lodges. Miss Eva Budd of Toronto Lodge and her sister, Mrs. Barbara Jackson of the Blavatsky Lodge who had been close friends of Mrs. Mackay from the early days of her work in Toronto Lodge, were both present. Another old and faithful worker has passed on—another link with the past has been broken.

\* \* \*

I wonder if any of our readers have any old copies of the issues of volume 6 of *The Canadian Theosophist* which they would be willing to donate. We have only one bound volume and no spare copies of the separate monthly issues. Three extra volumes of all issues are needed to complete sets of the magazine.

It is evident that older Theosophical works are still very much in demand. I have received a request from a member of the Toronto Lodge who is anxious to obtain Volume VI of Col. H. S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* in order to complete a set. If any reader possesses this book and is willing to sell it, or failing that, if anyone wishes to dispose of the whole series of this work, please get in touch with me.

\* \* \*

The many friends of Miss Madeline Hindsley of Toronto Lodge and a member of the Canadian Executive will be sorry to hear of her very serious illness. Miss Hindsley suffered a severe stroke on May 9 while attending to the library and has been only partially conscious at times since then. She is greatly missed from the Hall and from the Secret Doctrine Class of which she was the leader for many years.

\* \* \*

*The Theosophist* has appeared with a new and modern cover design. The old familiar cut of Lucifer, the Light-bearer, descending from the heavens has been replaced by a modern design created by Mr. James S. Perkins, the Vice-President. This conveys the same idea but in more abstract form. The figure of Lucifer has been replaced by a symbol of Theosophy, the official seal of the Society, and the descending grades of matter are indicated by successively darker bands of grey. Personally, I like it and send congratulations to Mr. Perkins.

\* \* \*

I have very much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society Mr. Albert E. Hewson of Toronto Lodge who became a member in May 1962.

D.W.B.

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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## MONTREAL VISIT

Miss Laura Gaunt of Toronto Lodge visited Montreal Lodge from Friday, June 1 to Sunday, June 3 and delivered two public addresses and also a talk to members on Sunday afternoon.

The titles of the lectures were "The Significance for Theosophists of Jung's Psychological Teachings" and "The Poetry of the Irish Mystic A.E." The meetings were well attended by members and friends, and some

ten or twelve young people, newcomers to Theosophy, were attracted to the public lectures. Montreal Lodge reported that the results were most gratifying and expressed its gratitude to Miss Gaunt and to the General Executive for arranging the visit.

## ANNUAL ELECTION

The ballots in the election of the General Executive for the year 1962-63 were counted on Sunday, June 10, the scrutineers being Mrs. H. Lomas of Hamilton Lodge, Mr. John Gaunt and Mr. Ralph A. Webb, both of Toronto Lodge. The total number of ballots returned was 196, but one ballot was spoiled. The quota of votes required to elect a candidate was determined to be 25 votes.

On the count of the first choice votes, Miss Hindsley, Mr. Davy, Mr. Kinman and Dr. Wilks were elected, Miss Hindsley receiving exactly 25 votes, the other three receiving more than the quota, thus leaving surpluses to be distributed. Mr. Kinman received the largest number of first choice votes with a surplus of 45 and this surplus was then distributed to the second choice candidates shown on the surplus ballots. On this distribution, Mr. Weaver received more votes than the quota and he too was declared elected. The distribution of Dr. Wilks' surplus votes gave five more votes to Mr. Wood and so he was elected. Mr. Davy had a surplus of seven votes, but the distribution of these did not result in the election of another candidate, but the surplus votes of Mr. Wood on the fifth count went to Mr. Bunting and he was elected. The seven candidates had now been elected and the counting was over.

The new Executive will consist of Mr. C. E. Bunting, Mr. T. G. Davy, Miss M. Hindsley, Mr. G. I. Kinman, Mr. C. Weaver, Dr. W. E. Wilks and Mr. E. P. Wood. The first meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Sunday, July 8 at 2.30 p.m. D.W.B.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN CANADA Election 1962

Total Votes 196  
 Spoiled Ballot 1  
 Votes to be Counted 195

Members to be elected 7  
 Quota  $\frac{195}{8} + 1 = 25$

Names of Candidates	1st Count	2nd Count		3rd Count		4th Count		5th Count	
		Transfer	Total	Transfer	Total	Transfer	Total	Transfer	Total
	Kinman		Wilks		Davy		Wood		
Bunting	5	12	17	2	19	4	23	2	25
Davy	32		32		32	-7	25		25
Hindsley, Miss	25		25		25		25		25
Kinman	70	-45	25		25		25		25
Lakin, Mrs.	3	4	7	1	8	2	10		10
Oberlerchener	3	5	8		8	1	9		9
Weaver	16	10	26		26		26		26
Wilks	33		33	-8	25		25		25
Wood	8	14	22	5	27		27	-2	25
Totals	<u>195</u>		<u>195</u>		<u>195</u>		<u>195</u>		<u>195</u>

**BOOK REVIEW**

*Letters from AE.* Selected and edited by Alan Denson. With a foreword by Dr. Monk Gibbon. London New York Toronto: Abelard-Schuman, 1961. \$7.50.

Specializing in the Irish literary Renaissance and compiler of the *Printed Writings by G. W. Russell (AE), A List with Some Notes on his Pictures and Portraits*, Alan Denson has been able to amass an impressive and representative collection of AE's personal and public letters. The George William Russell who emerges is a fully rounded personality with widespread interests and exciting talents.

It may be surprising to Theosophists who

have long enjoyed his mystical poems to discover that AE was an organizer of co-operative farming and a practical rural economist. Indeed, his last visit to America was made under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture! Less surprising will be the many letters arising from his experiences as editor of *The Irish Homestead* and later *The Irish Statesman*.

Again less surprising but hardly less interesting, the most significant aspect of AE's life from the Theosophical point of view is his mastery over practical affairs, his honoured place among the men shaping the nascent Ireland. AE was no starry-eyed dreamer. He was the man who in April

1904 wrote to W. B. Yeats concerning the *Rules of the Irish National Theatre Society* (which he, AE, had drafted and registered in Dublin, December 30, 1903,) as follows:

I have about ten years' experience of the rows between managers and secretaries in eight hundred societies and I tell you the only way to get things done is to define the work of each in an agreement. Otherwise each will be laying the blame for things not attended to on each other as Roberts and Fay do now. I have heard them complain about each other for hours. Don't let their work depend much on each others work or there will be more. If Roberts is merely secretary, keeps accounts, minutes, summons meetings, he will have no opportunity to row with Fay or Fay with him. It could not be bettered by either of them being out. Things like this always will occur when the duties of each are ill defined. It is human nature.

So it is. Yet the man who recognized the stuff of which humanity is made as it grapples with the trials of life could also recognize the stuff of which humanity is made as it triumphs over those perils and escapes free and lovely to its source. He wrote of death:

I wonder whether you could think of death so gaily as I do. I expect when this old body opens its doors an airy child will go out in the wind and run to the wonder worlds and to meet its friends made young again. I hope to meet you there in an airy body, with all your curves more shining. Don't choose any other Heaven world but the Irish. None of the others are any good.

This is the AE who left behind him at death a heavily underscored copy of the Theosophical Company's 1925 photographic facsimile of the original edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. His mystical pronouncements gain depth, validity and public respect because of the public life which supported them. His actions in the community gained subtlety, perceptivity and

spirituality because of the occult springs which fed them.

The result of this dual approach to life was an extraordinarily complex character who was capable of containing within himself many paradoxes. Perhaps no better sketch of him has ever been written than this account by Miss Ruth Pitter, the English poet, which is tucked away in a footnote by Mr. Denson:

It was wonderful weather, and we had many a delightful walk. I can see him now, 'wading on the strand', in the same clothes that he had worn in Bloomsbury—dark suit, broad hat, but his trousers rolled right up and his boots hung round his neck. With stately gesture he talked continually, wading majestic among such droves of prawns and shrimps as I have never beheld since. I once caught a good bagful, but when I started to boil them the lightning struck. Nothing, he said, should be done to death with boiling water in his house. He was beautiful in anger, his whole person expanding and his eyes altering completely. To make up for my loss, he bought some from the lobsterman which had been decently boiled out of sight somewhere. One quiet Sunday morning, when the tide was out, he suggested that we should make some statuary out of the excellent muddy sand of the foreshore, which was a perfect medium. This proved absorbing, and I had just finished a large Boddhisattva, or some such thing when I looked up, and there was half the village silently roosting on the cliff, completely bewitched by the creative spectacle. AE was rather perturbed, grabbed his boots and dodged round a rock to put them on. It was the only time I had seen him self-conscious.

Mr. Dunsons's book is complete, scholarly and above all fascinating for the glimpses it gives of the effect produced on the Irish literary Renaissance by the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky.

Laura Gaunt

# SPONTANEOUS GENERATION

BY ELOUISE R. HARRISON, LLB

In H.P.B.'s day, it was Louis Pasteur's experiments, together with those of Tyndall's that exploded the once-held theory of spontaneous generation. Spontaneous generation was the theory that life rises continually from non-living matter, in the same way in which first maggots and then flies were once thought to arise spontaneously from decaying matter.

Madam Blavatsky tells her readers in *The Secret Doctrine*, page 286, that the Esoteric Science believes in spontaneous generation and that it was a regular mode under different physical conditions than those we find now, and in much earlier ages. She says, further, on page 150, volume II (first edition):

“Spontaneous generation' is an exploded theory, we shall be told. Pasteur's experiments disposed of it twenty years ago, and Professor Tyndall is against it. Well, suppose he is? He ought to know that, should spontaneous generation be indeed proven impossible in our present world period and actual conditions - which the Occultists deny - still it would be no demonstration that it could not have taken place under different cosmic conditions, not only in the seas of the Laurentian period, but even on the then convulsed earth . . . .

If spontaneous generation has changed its methods now, owing perhaps to accumulated material on hand, so as to almost escape detection, it was in full swing in the genesis of terrestrial life.”

In other words, though not in operation now, spontaneous generation was in 'full swing' in the genesis or beginning of this terrestrial life. In another place, she quotes from a work by Dr. Louis Buchner, on *Force and Matter*, wherein he declares, page 718-719, Vol. II of *The Secret Doctrine*, that:

“Spontaneous generation played, no doubt, a more important part in the primeval epoch than at present; nor can it be denied that in this way beings of a higher organization were produced than now,' for this is the claim of Occultism”, she adds.

Spontaneous generation was the method that bridged the gap from the astral to the new physical condition of the earth and earth life. Once the forms had clothed themselves with matter, such a mode was no longer generally necessary; and the various forms of physical reproduction commenced to take its place.

Today, however, we have several scientists who have conducted experiments and studies which have led them to the conclusion that spontaneous generation certainly did operate in the early states or stages of earth life on this planet; thereby completely vindicating what HPB had written in *The Secret Doctrine* on that score.

It will prove of great interest to look briefly at the conclusions of such scientists; and for that purpose, there is a note in the November, 1961 *Saturday Night*, by Brian Cahill, the science editor, who refers briefly to the studies of such scientists thus:-

“Harvard Biologist Dr. George Wald has recently pulled together a great deal of evidence for spontaneous generation - evidence based on the work of the English Geneticist, J. B. S. Haldane, the Russian, I. A. Oparin, the American Nobel Laureate, Harold Urey and many others. And allowing for the tremendous advance in basic knowledge and techniques, the main difference between their concept of the origin of life and that of Father Needham is that Father Needham believed spontaneous generation to be a continuing process while the moderns believe that it was responsible for

the first life on earth, but came to a halt many billions of years ago."

But the way, the English Jesuit Father mentioned, Father Needham, was a 17th century cleric who firmly believed in spontaneous generation, reconciling it with the Bible by drawing the attention of his followers to that statement in Genesis where God ordered the earth and waters to *bring forth* living things - which was another way of ordering nature to start life by spontaneous generation, he reasoned.

To continue with an examination of the ideas developed by these scientists, we see that Dr. Wald and the other biologists mentioned have direct evidence from fossil remains that the primitive earth was covered with seas rich in chemicals. These scientists then went to work and set up experiments in which they simulated the exact condition of the early earth and its chemical seas. They reasoned that the effects of lightning, electricity, motion and heat would cause these chemicals in the seas to combine to form very simple organic molecules, and series of these molecules would represent an intermediate stage between inert matter and living organisms such as we know them now. As time went on the molecules became more and more complex and gave rise gradually to the first primitive forms that have now been found in very ancient strata.

Accordingly, the scientists shot electrical charges through these chemicals they had assembled, and which were the exact chemicals to be found in the early seas of the earth, and they produced an amazing result. The chemicals combined, just as they reasoned they would, and the product of this combination was a very primitive protein or amino acid, the building blocks of all life cells.

They then considered the result. Would spontaneous generation continue? No, they reasoned, it definitely would not because the presence of this new living matter, with its biological processes of intake and outflow of other matter would so alter the

primeval chemistry of the seas and also the atmosphere, that the unattached chemical molecules would never be able again to unite in exactly the same way. Life had been given its first impetus and now the mode of spontaneous generation could retire, as it was no longer necessary or needed.

We can see, therefore, that not only has science today made a tremendous step in the discovery of how life began, but it has also vindicated one of the ideas in *The Secret Doctrine* almost to the letter. Science, has, however, quite a bit farther to go. What, for instance, caused the great differentiation of molecules and protein to take place and bring about the different forms of animal and man, after the first early forms? Science, as yet, cannot answer this question. *The Secret Doctrine*, however, has the explanation, when it speaks to us of the astral pattern forms which came to earth to be clothed in matter from other and more advanced spheres. These were the patterns for the molecules to follow and in the process form the various creatures, which after the impulse, changed, in the case of man, due to his thinking and behaviour and the further incarnation of Manas into the race.

H.P.B. tells us that there were many different creators in the early days of evolution: Dhyans Chohans of other more advanced planets, who aided the work of creation on this small globe. Just as an architect must first draw a plan, and in fact a very detailed plan first in his mind and then on paper, so the plans for all the various forms of life had to be drawn or rather delineated on the astral planes for the material molecules to copy.

Some scientists say that it was pure chance that caused all the molecules to come together and form all the various plants and millions of different forms of animals. Let them apply the same type of reasoning as they survey the outlines of a yacht riding at anchor. Could they with any truth say that pure chance caused all the



various pieces of wood, fiberglass, metal, and all the different other materials composing the yacht to come together and create the graceful launch? It is obvious that chance had nothing to do with it; in fact it is not likely that said scientists would want to get into a boat that was built by pure chance, or thrown together by such a method.

Yet these same persons, well aware of the blue-prints executed before the boat was in existence, cannot imagine a plan for something far more complex than a boat, namely, an animal. It cannot be denied, therefore, that science even in 1962 has lifted only a tiny corner of the "veil of Isis." Nevertheless, we can see that, as science moves ahead, day by day its adherents are proving by experimentation and theory, that the ideas contained in that superb and monumental work of genius, *The Secret*

*Doctrine*, are far nearer the truth than anything else so far. That even the scientific works which were almost dogmas in the 19th century and which she ridiculed, are now being cast aside to make way for the corrections she made in said works.

While some students, now as in the past, are beginning to doubt her works, modern science, as she predicted, has become and is now becoming her greatest ally.

It is almost safe to say that before 1975, we can expect some really astounding scientific proofs of her great work *The Secret Doctrine*, actually the greatest influence on modern knowledge today. In fact the vast progress made in science, has literally been due to the carrying out of the ideas she predicted and the spreading abroad of the old ideas of the Wisdom Religion embodied in her works.

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE ANCIENT WISDOM - ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES

BY RICHARD SATTELBERG

Philosophy being the love of and also pursuit for wisdom, its subject matter should merit serious reflection from all theosophists who would more fully comprehend the essence of the theosophical teachings. The merits of philosophy are as a liberalizing influence upon the intellectual development of mankind, enabling them to free themselves from the limitations of sectarian dogmas and the prejudice of one-sided views; the presentations of various philosophies of nature, man's relationship to nature, and man's relationship to others; and a general history of the dominant ideas influencing the development of Western and Eastern civilizations.

From its earliest inception, philosophy has represented man as that rational creature most apt to understand the workings of nature and the Universal Mind. As a result, various speculative and analytical systems have been formulated to answer man's own deep-felt spiritual yearnings and

also his desire to have an intellectual understanding of experience within his cultural environment. As a consequence of this spiritual-rational approach, religion and science were first seen as essential opposites and complements. This was especially true in the West in the teachings derived from the Greek period, from 585 B.C., with Thales of Miletus, to 322 B.C., with the death of Aristotle; and in approximately the same time in India with the innovation of the early Buddhistic and Jainistic philosophies, the revolutionary outgrowth of the much earlier Vedic Brahmanical Hinduism. Some of the ethical aspects of these philosophies, East and West, will now be briefly sketched in order to show the layman theosophist the value of the philosophical traditions.

### Importance of the Greek Ethical Philosophies

In Greece (where we in the West derive so many pertinent ideas applicable to mod-

ern life and thought) the social-political setting was virtually ideal for intellectual innovation and creativity, although the eventual incessant strife between the city-states resulted in foreign domination and an abrupt halt to the great speculative systems. Before this termination, great ethical systems were formulated. A cursory gaze at the Pythagorean and Stoic as well as the Epicurean schools will bear out this assertion.

The Pythagoreans are of especial value to all theosophists. Their leader, Pythagoras of Samos, was a mystical figure whose main contribution to philosophy seems to have been the statement "all things are numbers". Realizing the significance of ethical living as well as silence, music, and philosophy, he formulated various precepts for his religious-scientific community, i.e., do not eat beans; do not eat the heart; do not stir the fire with iron. Those who gave strict adherence to these rules were quite often vegetarian as a consequence.

An archaic legend regards Pythagoras as having travelled to India and brought back to the West the logic and religious beliefs of the Brahmins. The legend is of a conjectural nature, mainly because of the lack of internal evidence which would settle the question. However, it does seem strange (as H. P. Blavatsky once observed) that the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls should have borne such a markedly similar nature to the Hindu view, if there was no contact at all between the Pythagorean leader and the Brahmins. Other similarities also are difficult to argue away; the vegetarianism of both Hindus and Buddhists (as well as the Jains) and the fact that Buddhist women could follow the monastic life (both men and women could join the Pythagorean order).

Because the Pythagoreans lived in a period of Orphic flourishing, they too, adopted the latter's notion (later followed by some of the Stoics, i.e., Epictetus; that the body (soma) is the tomb (sema) of the soul, and sought bodily purification as the

means of ensuring salvation. This was to be accomplished by following specified ethical precepts and exposing oneself to the beneficent effects of music (perhaps much in the same manner of Socrates when musing that philosophy was the highest music). Since they placed equal emphasis on conduct and wisdom, the Pythagoreans appear to antedate Socrates' notion that virtue is associated with knowledge, and Aristotle's view that virtue is an activity of the soul in accordance with right reason.

We will now consider, in summary fashion, the ethical philosophies of the Epicureans and Stoics. Though the approach is different, both the Stoics and Epicureans have a similar attitude towards emotion: the former strove for ataraxia (freedom from emotion), the latter, arapaxia (imperturbability).

Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) came from the island of Samos. He set up his school in Athens about 306, forming a group of loyal disciples which included women and slaves. Like Pythagoras and the Buddha, he was highly venerated by his followers; a later admirer, Lucretius, declared: ". . . a God he was, a God, most noble Mummius, who first found out that the plan of life which is now termed wisdom, and who by trained skill rescued life from such great billows and such thick darkness, and moored it in so perfect a calm and in so brilliant a light." (Lucretius, v. 1. 7, Munro's translation, Geo. Bell & Sons).

The doctrine of pleasure was a major theme for Epicurus. To him it signified one good, quite obvious and not to be denied. The chief good was to be discovered in pleasure of the mind, not so in the sense of a rigorous academic training, but in mild conversations, in harmonious relationships with one's friends. If one could read and write, he had the essentials. It mattered little if one read Homer or bothered with mathematics, logic, or grammar. Pleasure was an outcome of a wise selection; the pleasures to be sought were preferably simple, rather than of a luxurious nature.

One found a supreme pleasure when he was not entangled in pain or fear; remarkably was this so when he entered the philosophical-mental state of (ataraxy) and found himself in the undisturbed control of all his faculties, minus a troubled spirit. The serenity and tranquility of mind, coupled with a humble subsistence, was to be esteemed above all the luxuries afforded by riches: "He enjoys wealth", says Epicurus, "most who needs it least. If thou wilt make a man happy, add not unto his riches, but take away from his desires." Epicurus was also a materialist, with a Democritean view of atoms. He held that not only imperturbability, but natural science was essential for that goal of life; calmness of mind. Religion was looked upon as a barrier to this inner peace, because it upset one's life and future with superstition and fear. One sees in him much of the intentions of Gautama (whom we will also encounter shortly). It is amazing also how he even appears to mirror many of the thoughts of the present day Jidee Krishnamurti.

Epicureanism has a great deal in common with Stoicism. Like Epicurus, Zeno (340-256 B.C.) blended materialism and ethics into a philosophical system; unfortunately, since his writings survive only in fragments, little is known of his ethics, although Bertrand Russell suggests that it may have been derived from Heraclitus, wherein opposites implying one another, it is logically impossible for good to exist without evil. It will perhaps be more fruitful to consider the Stoic ethics, in a general fashion, as the philosopher Arthur K. Rogers has done.

Both Epicureanism and Stoicism were preoccupied with the problem of Desire; both sought to avoid harmful desires, and cultivate a degree of independence from external things. States Epictetus (60-100 A.D.): "Athens is beautiful, yes, but happiness is far more beautiful—freedom from passions and disturbance, the sense that your affairs depend on no one". The Stoics, too, recognized the important role of the

mind in attaining that inner peace so eagerly sought amidst a scene of struggle and poverty; in the words of Epictetus: ". . . make a desperate effort on behalf of tranquility of mind, freedom and magnanimity".

Unlike the Epicureans, however, the Stoics believed that reality contained one universal life; considered in its totality this reality is God or nature. The virtuous life therefore is linked with the notion of living in conformity with nature. Exclaims Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.): "Everything harmonizes with me which is harmonious to thee, O Universe. Nothing for me is too early or too late, which is in due time for thee". Even human values themselves are to be derived from the universe, which is also teleological and a rational whole. One's conduct, in accordance with nature, is related to one's impulses, but it is as the outcome of rational judgment and choice that one's notion of virtue comes into being.

There is that tendency in Stoicism to regard feelings and emotions as a disease, however, and a disturbance to the reason; accordingly, they must be controlled and finally even eliminated if there is ever to be true freedom from emotion. The wise man must be without passion, but one may ask, has any wise man actually achieved this goal? Freedom of pleasure in this context, could be understood to be that freedom from *tanha* which the Buddha so advocated, how otherwise, are we to comprehend it? The rigidity of asceticism led the Buddha to the middle path and Aristotle to the mean; it would appear that even for the Stoics this is most advisable and in accordance with the law or Reason they so admired. In fact, their self-righteous pride of wisdom and freedom from external allurements led them to divide mankind into two classes, the sages and the fools, and eventually to a contempt of all mankind who delighted in those pleasures they so heartily scorned, a lesson for all of us who would forget the frailty of mankind.

## The Buddhist Ethics and the Goal of Enlightenment

Buddha rebelled against the corrupted Hinduism of his age, especially the caste system which gave the Brahmins the right to spiritual knowledge at the expense of the other castes, to whom they administered ineffectual ritual, libations; sacrifices and chants. Buddha questioned the validity of these ritual observances, dismissing the belief in their efficacy as a fetter to man's spiritual advancement. To cope with the monopoly held on spiritual truths by teaching and making said truths known to the people in general. Characteristic were his remarks: "the Tathagatē has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher", and his deathbed utterance: "I have not kept anything back" (this latter remark is conjectural if we postulate a secret doctrine, of which he was familiar, but did not reveal outside of his close circle of Arhats).

Gautama's immediate concern was with the misery he experienced around him and the way to its extinction. This he believed could be achieved by anyone who followed his doctrine of the Four Noble Truths: life is *dukkha* (suffering), the cause of suffering is *tanha* (desire), desire or selfish craving can be conquered, the overcoming of *tanha* comes from following the Eight-fold Path: right knowledge, right aspiration, right speech, right behaviour, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right absorption. This doctrine is the core of the Buddhist ethics, the practicing of which Buddha maintained would not only rid us of *tanha* but reward us with happiness. *Tanha* also being the cause of rebirth, following the Path, also meant the end of the wheel of rebirth or continued reincarnation. Following the path meant each individual, independent of any ritual or tenet of faith, developed his own self-reliance (much as might a karma yogi, i.e., Mahatma Gandhi) becoming the master and creator of his destiny. "Those who, relying upon themselves only, shall not look for assistance to anyone besides themselves,

it is they who shall reach the topmost height."

## Mahavira and the Reverence for Life

Jainism has not been as influential in shaping Eastern thought as Buddhism; but its establishment occurred approximately the same time as the former (Mahavira's dates 549-476 B.C., Buddha's 563-483 B.C.) The last Jain leader was Vardhamana Mahavira known also as Nigantha Natu-putta of the Buddhist Pitakas. A certain Rishabha is supposed to have set up the sect about 250 years before Mahavira, but he is generally considered to be a mythical personage.

Like Buddhism, Jainism aimed at freedom from rebirth. This liberation was to be achieved by the gradual elimination of eight varieties of karma by continuous purgation of the soul; the soul thus freed from its burden could ascend to the top of the universe.

Jainism demanded the taking of vows, i.e., "not to kill". This injunction was extended to all living forms, including vermin, and their removal, rather than destruction, from one's home or path of travel. The vows were primarily designed for advanced laymen and monks and, unlike Buddhism, only a cultivated elite may follow the Jainist creed; not the general public.

The monastic discipline was more severe than that of the Pythagoreans or Buddhists. There was (and still is) severe physical abstinence from such items as honey, flesh, roots, and alcohol, but a severe mental discipline, where one aims at purity of thought, the development of contemplation and practices confession and repentance.

## Conclusion

As the reader has probably observed, the ethical views are only one aspect of the above philosophies; they also have their metaphysical and scientific sides which should also be consulted by the serious student. As a rule the above views were philosophies of coping with the miseries of sentient existence. Misery, disease, death, ignorance, superstition and a host of other

misfortunes have always been present to arrest progress. In the light of theosophy, i.e., the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, we have a more complete understanding than has come down to us in the philosophical tradition concerning man's ultimate destiny, but with philosophy we have the instrument by which the wisdom of our ancestors, however finite it may be considered by modern lay sceptics, can be rendered in all its intellectual enrichment. In the words of Seneca: "Philosophy is not a theory for popular acceptance and designed for show; it is not in words, but in deeds. It is not employed to help us pass the day agreeably or to remove ennui from our leisure; it forms and fashions the mind, sets in order our life, directs our action, shows what ought to be done and to be left undone; it sits at the helm and guides the course through perplexities and dangers". (*Letters*, II, 4.)

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## WHAT THE MASTERS TEACH

(Continued from Page 58)

it, too, dissolves, for ever, while the higher principles, after a period of rest and spiritual digestion in the Devachan or Heaven World, untroubled with human contact, return to earth for a period of new experience in circumstances exactly suited to the working out of the effects of a myriad past causes in the previous and earlier lives gone by.

### Total Harmony

For the twin law of Karma/Rebirth admits no exception or escape. "Not in the sky, not in the sea, nor in a cave in the mountains, can a man escape from the (consequences) of his evil deeds." The Universe is total harmony, and that which breaks the harmony must adjust the breach. He who pushes the pendulum from the straight will receive the return force of the

swing. The Christian teaching, "As ye sow, so shall ye also reap" is pure Theosophy and the Law knows no exceptions. Each man is indeed the sum total of his own past Karma; of acts of thought or feeling or of his hands. And each is causing now the consequences which will form his mind and body in the days to be. It must be so, or the universe is chaos. But the universe is cosmos, law incarnate, and the Law is a living law.

On the downward and upward swing of Spirit/Matter the one Life-force moves many times round the cycle of a chain of planets each existing on seven planes, and at each stage there are lessons for the God-man to learn and faculties to develop. At the moment we are on the lowest form of our planet earth, the physical, on the fourth Round of it, in a sub-race of the Fifth Race and developing the faculty of Manas, the thinking mind. Next we must learn to unfold the intuition, and know, as we now only believe the truth of the saying, "Look within—thou art Buddha!"

### Rediscovery by Science

These are but some of the basic principles of the Wisdom whose ambit is an impersonal, ceaseless, universal process of the out-breathing and in-breathing of a Whole which is past conceiving. Fragments of this Teaching are to be found in the Vedas and Upanishads, in Mahayana Buddhism, in the Kabbalah, in Genesis and in the traditional wisdom of men called savages. Science is rediscovering some of it, notably on the largest scale, in astronomy, and the smallest, in physics. Each is finding slowly that there is no ultimate matter, only Spirit in changing form, and yet no Spirit in the sense of Creator, but only finer and finer forms in which the primordial Essence is veiled. Nature's laws are found to be living laws, and death, save of the fleeting form, an illusion.

### Teaching the Way

But doctrine, however noble, is not enough. There is a Way to be found and trodden, though there may be a thousand

ways to the entrance of that Way. The Way is one, and the Masters stand at the entrance to it; "when the pupil is ready the Master appears." The pupil is self-chosen, in that he makes himself what the Masters need in their ceaseless work for mankind. Each in the course of the daily round learns self-control, the courage to stand alone, the will-power to march unaided at least a long way to the Goal. By his own efforts he must learn to develop his mind, by constant meditation and by unwearying "right mindfulness" at all hours of the day. Above all he learns to forget the claims and desires of self in a purpose of living which is now remoulded; to apply, with deep compassion, all that he has and is to the service of mankind.

Then he noticed, examined and tested, at first unknown to his conscious mind. But his intuition is opening as a bud unfolds, and he becomes aware of suggestions which to him are orders. In time he is put on probation, to be knowingly tested further. Only when every test is passed is he fit to be helped to develop the powers the abuse of which is spiritual death. He learns "to know, to dare and to be silent." Then he will suffer, more than ever before and more than most of his fellow men. He will be tempted, abused, misunderstood, punished, not for his failures but by them. None will thank or praise him, and few will notice what he does. But in all his loneliness and weariness he will not cease from moving forward—his very failures will be so much experience to be transmuted into will-power on the Way. As the Master K.H. wrote, "We have one word for all aspirants, 'Try'."

Such is the Wisdom, such are those who guard it. Such are we whom nothing hinders save our self-imprisonment and feebleness of will. But if we wish to rise and move into the ambit of the Masters' work we know, because it is written in *The Voice of the Silence*, where to begin: "The first step is to live to benefit mankind."

*The Theosophical Journal*  
May - June, 1962

## TORONTO LODGE

Lady Luia Forbes, life-long Theosophist and friend of Dr. Annie Besant and of Mrs. Alice Bailey, spoke to capacity crowds in the Hall of the Toronto Theosophical Society on June 24, 25, 27 and 28. Lady Forbes was in Toronto under the auspices of the English-Speaking Union of the United States and had appeared on television here and had lectured in the theatre of the Royal Ontario Museum, before Miss Laura Gaunt became aware of Lady Forbes' Theosophical background and told her of the existence of a Toronto branch of the Society. As a result of this meeting the four lectures were arranged, the titles being, "The Inca of Peru", "Death", "South Africa Today" and "Meditation and Prayer".

Lady Forbes' knowledge of the Inca civilization was gained over a ten year period when her husband, Sir Victor Courtenay Forbes, K.C.M.G., was British Ambassador to Peru. Lady Forbes studied the ancient Inca civilization and devoted much time to the welfare of the Indians of the Andes. For her services, Lady Forbes received the Peruvian decoration of the Order of the Sun, with gold bar, an honour never before bestowed upon a woman. Her talk on the Incas was, therefore, based upon personal knowledge.

The talk on South Africa also had a personal background, for Lady Forbes was born in Capetown and her early years were spent in South Africa. The lectures on "Death" and "Meditation and Prayer" dealt with these subjects in clear, simple language which any newcomer to the Society could understand.

Lady Forbes will be on the West coast in the autumn and will be happy to speak to Theosophical groups if it will be possible for her to do so. Her mailing address is c/o "Windymere", Mendham, N.J., U.S.A.

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Toronto Lodge had another honored guest on July 7 and 8 when Mr. Geoffrey

A. Barborka, author of *The Divine Plan*, a commentary on *The Secret Doctrine*, spoke on "Why do People Object to Reincarnation", and "On the Origin of Theosophy — Its Influence on Christianity".

Mr. Barborka conducted the Secret Doctrine Class on Sunday morning and attended the meeting of the Canadian Executive in the afternoon. A reception was held for him after the Sunday evening lecture when Mr. Barborka had an opportunity of saying his farewells to members and friends. He has been living near Chicago, but is moving to Ojai, California. Our best wishes go with him.

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### "THE SUN IS BLUE"

We are indebted to Mrs. M. D. Buchanan, President of Vancouver Lodge, for drawing our attention to a statement made by Colonel John Glenn, the astronaut, concerning the colour of the sun, and also to a statement made by H.P.B. on this subject.

Writing in 1888, H.P.B. said:

"Moreover, the true colour of the sun is blue, and it appears yellow only owing to the effects of the absorption of vapours (chiefly metallic) by its atmosphere. All is Maya on our Earth."

S.D. 111. 461. (BCW XII, 548f.)

Colonel Glenn, in an article which appeared in *Life*, March 9, 1962, wrote:

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p. 28  
"The sun itself was so bright that I had to use filters to look directly at it. When the sun was still high in the sky its light was more bluish-white than yellow. When it came through the window it was similar in color and intensity to the huge arc lights we use at the Cape."

This is just one more confirmation of H.P.B.'s words that the truths of *The Secret Doctrine* would be recognized more readily and fully in the 20th century than in the age when she lived and wrote.

## INTELLECT AND HEART-LIGHT

The chief trouble with the Theosophical Movement, we believe, is the disproportionate emphasis on *intellect*, from which comes all of our brain-mind wrangling over the teachings, or over what some of us claim are the teachings. There is an almost total lack of the Heart-Light, of that Compassion which is "the Heart of the Universe."

Intellectual mastery of the teachings is a relatively small accomplishment. Anyone with an intelligence quotient of 100 can do it with ease. But, as one of the Masters has written, ". . . *nothing* draws us to any outsider save his evolving spirituality. He may be a Bacon or an Aristotle in knowledge, and still not even make his current felt a feather's weight by us, if his power is confined to *Manas* . . . *Manas*, and so your greatest men count but as nonentities in the arena where greatness is measured by the standard of spiritual development."

George Cardinal LeGros in *The Theosophical Reminder*, May, 1962.

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## THE THREE TRUTHS

There are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, yet remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendor have no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us, and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself, the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

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

*Idyll of the White Lotus*

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