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THUS HAVE I HEARD

"The first repeat in pride; 'Behold I know', the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess, 'thus have I heard'."
—*Voice of the Silence*

If the student attitude which is advocated in Theosophy is maintained in all reading and discussion of mystical and occult literature, there will be little tendency to assert that we 'know' this that or the other thing in spiritual matters. We will realize that positive knowledge is far from us and that wisdom is not an ability to repeat something which someone once said or which we have remembered from a book—even if the book be *The Secret Doctrine* and we are able on occasion to quote selections from it appropriate to the point under discussion.

And yet it is difficult to remember at all times that as students of Theosophy, we are, or should be, engaged in seeking truth alone—and not confirmation of our preconceived ideas. Our minds rebel against the teaching that we must be prepared to abandon and leave behind all that we think we know. The mind likes to build upon certainties which it has accepted; it likes to think 'this much I know' and from certainty on small points to go forward to more inclusive certainties. This is the familiar way of head-learning and if those 'certainties' are never questioned, the mind will revert to them time and time again, like a needle following a cross-over groove in a worn record, and no new approach will ever be made. If this happens we cease to be Truth-seekers and become conformists. If a sacred

and precious doubt ever comes to us before the mind slips back into one of its well-worn tracks, we should seize upon that fleeting instant of opportunity. A doubt may well be an intimation that there is a tangent, a new way out of the circle, which we have not explored. It might lead us to a new path; it might indicate a way leading a short distance at least up the mountain-side to an eminence from which we could view from above our little maze of familiar lanes, roads and squares. If this should happen, we will see our little village of thought in its relationship to the greater countryside round about it—and we will never feel confined to that village again.

But there are individuals who do not want to have any questions raised as to the validity of their own 'certainties'. These have been won with effort, they are familiar and are as comfortable as an old suit of clothes. They love them and refuse to question them. If this happens to a member of the Theosophical Society it means that the individual has paused for the time being at some point on the path that leads ever upward. He is satisfied with his own present conceptions of the great truths which Theosophy brings and is not questioning further nor endeavouring to expand his understanding. He 'knows', and the attitude of 'thus have I heard' is not for him.

I often remember the words of Lao Tzu concerning himself which appear in his immortal *Tao Te Ching*. Lao Tzu was one of the great Teachers of China; he was hon-

oured and revered as a spiritual philosopher, one who knew the "Way" and was competent to instruct others. But when as an old man he was persuaded to leave a few of his teachings in writing, he closed his little book thus; 'I am a man foolish in heart, dull and confused. Other men are full of light; I alone seem to be in dark-

ness. I am unsettled as the ocean, drifting as though I had no stopping-place . . . forlorn as one who has no where to lay his head . . . yet I revere the Foster-Mother, Tao'. Lao Tzu was one of those 'who in humbleness have garnered' and his wisdom was not of the head, but of the heart.

—Xenos

THEOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY

ANNIE BESANT

This article was originally published in Lucifer, October 15, 1891. The contemporary references apart, time has not detracted from its topicality, and it is offered here as a basis for further discussion. Mr. Emory P. Wood, Edmonton Lodge, brought the article to our attention as being the source of "The Fountain-head" quotation which appeared in the article, "The Proper Presentation of Theosophy" in our Mar.-Apr., 1968 issue, and on which we received a number of enquiries.—Eds.

During the last month all the press of England seems to have turned itself into a missionary of Theosophy; In London the Daily Chronicle—the paper that among the great London dailies is the one most devoted to matters that interest the workers—opened its columns day after day from August 31st until October 1st—to a free discussion on Theosophical questions; the other London papers followed suit at a respectful distance, and the whole provincial press, from the great provincial journals to the smallest country rag, joined in the hurly-burly, until there can scarcely be a man or woman in the country, who takes the smallest interest in public affairs, but must have heard at least that Theosophy exists. Many that sat in darkness have seen the shining of a great light, and from among the curious, excited, jeering, shouting thousands have come out an earnest, joyous few, who amid this deafening hubbub have

caught the thrilling whisper which is Sound and Soundlessness in one. To many a far-off hamlet and to many a home whither no Theosophical teaching could penetrate, the loud-mouthed Press has gone, and words either of attack or of defence have struck the note which needs but to be sounded to make response in those that are ready. So are being gathered in those who will carry the work of the Society far on into the Twentieth Century; those whose Karma has brought them to the point at which open the inner senses, which see the Light that to fleshly eyes is Darkness, which hear the Sound that to fleshly ears is Silence.

In the controversy that has raged so wildly a question has arisen that demands calm consideration and careful answer: "What aspect does Theosophy bear to Christianity?" It is a question that each will inevitably answer in his own way, according to his mental position, his prejudices, and his

knowledge. The answer given in the ensuing pages is in no sense official; as the editor of *Lucifer*, I am morally responsible for unsigned articles as well as for my own, but the Theosophical Society is in no sense responsible either for *Lucifer* or its editor. *Lucifer* and its editor exist to serve the Theosophical Society, as the body in which the Theosophical Idea is incarnated at the present time, but they must take the whole responsibility of the views they present to the world.

Now the Theosophical Society has no creed. It is not Christian nor Buddhist; it is not Theistic nor Atheistic; it is not Materialist nor Spiritualist. It embraces men of all creeds and of none. Does anyone recognise the Brotherhood of all men? Then to him its doors are flung widely open, and the clasp of Brotherhood is offered. None may challenge his right of entry nor bid him stand aside.

But Theosophy is a body of knowledge, clearly and distinctly formulated in part and proclaimed to the world. Members of the Society may or may not be students of this knowledge, but none the less is it the sure foundation on which the Masters have built the Society, and on which its central teaching of the Brotherhood of Man is based. Without Theosophy Universal Brotherhood may be proclaimed as an Ideal, but it cannot be demonstrated as a Fact, and therefore Theosophists are needed to give stability to the Theosophical Society.

Now by Theosophy I mean the "Wisdom Religion," or the "Secret Doctrine," and our only knowledge of the Wisdom Religion at the present time comes to us from the Messenger of its Custodians, H. P. Blavatsky. Knowing what she taught, we can recognise fragments of the same teachings in other writings, but her message remains for us the test of Theosophy everywhere. As we learn, we verify some of its more elementary portions, and so—if need be—we may increase our confidence in the Messenger. Also, it is open to every student only to accept as he verifies, and to hold

his judgment in suspension as to anything that does not approve itself to his reason, or as to all that he has not yet proven. Only, none of us has any right to put forward his own views as "Theosophy," in conflict with hers, for all that we know of Theosophy comes from her. When she says "The Secret Doctrine teaches," none can say her nay; we may disagree with the teaching, but it remains "the Secret Doctrine," or Theosophy. She always encouraged independent thought and criticism, and never resented difference of opinion, but she never wavered in the distinct proclamation "The Secret Doctrine *is*" so-and-so.

Now she laid down certain distinct propositions as "fundamental," and anything that clashes with these is not Theosophy.

1. An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception, and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought. It is the One Reality, appearing under the two aspects of Spirit and Matter in the manifested Universe.

2. The eternity of the Universe *in toto*, universes manifesting and disappearing in accordance with the law of periodicity.

3. The identity of the Human Spirit with the Universal Spirit, and the obligatory pilgrimage of the former round the cycle of Incarnation, passing through all elemental forms and acquiring individuality. The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations. (See S.D. Vol. 1, P. 14-17)

I might select many other points authoritatively laid down as part of the Wisdom Religion, but these will suffice for the special purpose I have in hand, namely to

define the position of Theosophy towards Christianity.

The next matter to decide is the meaning of the word "Christianity." If by Christianity nothing more is meant than the teachings of Jesus on Brotherhood, forgiveness of injuries, non-retaliation, poverty, self-sacrifice, purity of thought, equal stringency in sexual morality for man and woman—then indeed Theosophy finds nothing to quarrel with in Christianity. But it points out that this lofty and pure morality is not distinctly Christian, but is the morality constantly reproclaimed by all Initiates who come forward as Teachers at any period of the world's history. It is not the appanage of one religion, it is the glory and the foundation of all. Said the Buddha: "A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; this is an old rule." Or Lao-Tsze: "The good I would meet with goodness. The not good I would meet with goodness also. The faithful I would meet with faith. The not faithful I would meet with faith also. Virtue is faithful. Recompense injury with kindness." Or Manu: "By forgiveness of injuries the learned are purified." What is there in any Scripture nobler than the declaration of Kwhanyin: "Never will I seek, nor receive, private individual salvation—never enter into final peace alone; but forever, and everywhere, will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout the world." Or, to quote the Buddha once again: "Crush out your pride. Speak evil of no one, but be thankful to him who blames thee, for he renders thee service by showing thee thy faults. Kill thine arrogance. Be kind and gentle to all; merciful to every living creature. Forgive those who harm thee, help those who need thy help, resist not thy enemies." Surely with all these, and myriads more, testimonies before it, Theosophy, the root of all that

is true in exoteric religions, may well endeavor to vindicate the essential unity of religions in these matters of deep morality, and Theosophists may well echo the complaint of their great Leader, gently reproaching a Christian Society for limiting "the Mysteries of the Divine Truth' to one single and the youngest of all religions, and Avatars to but one man." In very truth part of the mission of Theosophy in Western Europe seems to be to vindicate the teachings of Jesus against the Church that bears his name. As our Teacher wrote, in 1890:

"He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone"—at the guilty. These words appear to have been said in vain, as even Christian law sneers at their practical application. 'Heathen' Theosophy alone tries to remember, in our modern day, these noble words addressed to one caught in adultery: 'And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more'; and alone, again, bows in deep reverence before the divine mercy and Buddha-like wisdom of this judgment. But then we are only infidels and 'wretched atheists'. Yet this is the key to the seeming 'contradictions' in our teachings: we accept and try to follow almost every injunction of Christ—whether the latter be historical or ideal—while feeling the greatest contempt and irritation against that which is now called Christianity, but is simply unadulterated Pharisaism."

Hitherto religions have excommunicated and ostracised each other: Theosophy comes forth as a peacemaker, saying, "Sirs, ye are brethren: why do ye wrong to each other?" All great temples have one and the same foundation, but this unity of moral teaching is overlaid by the differing and often repulsive superstructure of ceremony and creed.

Again if "Christianity" be the esoteric meaning of the allegorical teachings of Jesus, who spoke not to the multitude save in parables, Theosophy has no quarrel with it. But alack. Christians are the first to de-

nounce the translation of his exoteric sayings into esoteric truths. The "Father in Heaven" is the well-known esoteric phrase for the Higher Self, but the exoteric Christian insists on turning it into a personal Deity. "Pray to thy Father in Heaven," in the Initiate's mouth is a direction to meditate on and aspire to the Higher Self. "The Son of God" is a title assumed by all Initiates, implying the assimilation of the Ego and the Higher Self, as does the sentence, "I and my Father are one." "I am the Way" again is a common phrase, the Guru being saluted by the Chela with the words, "Thou art the Path;" or again, the disciple is told: "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself." Christ is the title given to all triumphant Initiates who have passed the symbolical crucifixion and have become the anointed Masters of all nature. The "Kingdom of heaven" is the peaceful spiritual realm wherein dwell all who have reached the Inner Brotherhood, and it is "taken by violence," through the struggles and trials of chelaship, by those who succeed in passing through the final tests, and so in manifesting the Higher Ego, the Christ within them.

Only a very small, indeed a numerically insignificant body of Christians, would for one moment allow the correctness of this Theosophical reading of their familiar phrases; "the Church—the deadliest enemy of the ethics of Christ"—as H.P.B. called it in these pages last year, would incontinently denounce all such rendering and declare it anathema.

Now it is against Christianity as historically taught by the Christian churches that H.P.B. always set her face, and there are certain doctrines enunciated in the official

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documents of the churches which are in flat contradiction with the fundamental teachings of the Wisdom Religion. These may be held by members of the Theosophical Society, but they cannot be held by the Theosophist.

Let me take as an illustration the allied doctrines of vicarious atonement and salvation by faith. Ecclesiastical Christianity teaches that men's sins may be gotten rid of, and the penalties due to them remitted, by repentance and faith, the sinner being pardoned for the sake of Jesus, who has borne the punishment due to the guilt of men, and receiving the gifts of the Spirit for his sake. This doctrine is still held by the immense majority of Christian people, and is incorporated in the formularies of all the historical churches, though repudiated by the Broad Church School. But it is in direct and flagrant contradiction with "the pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy," which admits no privileges or gifts for man "save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit." According to one theory, the saint is made by the grace of God; according to the other, he is slowly built up by his own efforts through many incarnations.

Now this divergence of moral teaching is of the most immense importance to the progress of the race. The strenuous and long-continued efforts necessary for the solid building up of a noble character will not be undertaken and persisted in if men are taught to look without themselves instead of within themselves for the necessary strength.

The "forgiveness of sins" is part of the creed of all the churches, but Theosophy proclaims Karma, the inviolable Law, the perfect Justice, by which every evil deed, as well as good, works out its inevitable result. Too stern a law to suit the silken-clad nerveless ethics of the Nineteenth Century; too rigid and too impartial an order to suit those whose ideas of their Deity make him resemble themselves, easily accessible to judicious flattery and to be won by gifts

of abject repentance and of fulsome praise. Theosophy is of Vigour somewhat too virile for the languid platitudinarians of our time.

The doctrines of everlasting rewards and punishments—"heaven" and "hell"—are totally incompatible with Theosophy, which teaches that man returns to earth-life again and again, until he has exhausted all life's lessons and has evolved to human perfection, or has dropped out of the progressing race for this Manvantara. The periods between these recurrent incarnations are spent in rest—as night follows day and is spent in physical rest—brightened by dreams, i.e., by the action of consciousness in a subjective state. This "Devachan," subjective and transient, is the only Theosophical analogy of heaven, and from it the Self comes back to the school of earth. "Hell" is an allegorical word expressive of suffering on earth, the sorrow which "dogs the heels of sin."

The Pauline teaching of the subjection of women is, again, in antithesis to the

complete equality of the sexes, as taught by Theosophy. The human Self is sexless, and incarnates successively in male and female bodies during the long cycle of incarnation, gathering human experience in both alike. In one life a man, in another a woman, once more a man, and so on, life after life. Only thus can the Human Being be built up, the full stature of Humanity evolved.

Theosophists have it in charge not to whittle away the Secret Doctrine for the sake of propitiating the Christian churches that have forgotten Christ, any more than they may whittle it away for the sake of propitiating Materialistic Science. Steadily, calmly, without anger but also without fear, they must stand by the Secret Doctrine as she gave it, who carried unflinchingly through the storms of well-nigh seventeen years the torch of the Eastern Wisdom. The condition of success is perfect loyalty; let the churches climb to the Wisdom Religion, for it cannot descend to them.

THE ESSENTIAL KIERKEGAARD

RICHARD SATTELBERG

Although existentialism has become well-known and more sophisticatedly formulated in the twentieth century, it has nineteenth century roots in the views of the Danish theologian and philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). In his one-man attempt to overthrow the more collective philosophy of the great German thinker, George Hegel, Kierkegaard drew attention to the needs of the individual human being as a living, struggling, feeling entity. Individual conscience was of primary concern to Kierkegaard, while Hegel felt that to be guided by one's conscience was to act in violation of the moral law. By employing logic to create an intricate hierarchy of triads, Hegel let himself open to serious

criticism. Kierkegaard writes:

"If Hegel had written the whole of his logic and then said, in the preface, that it was merely an experiment in thought in which he had even begged the question in many places, then he would certainly have been the greatest thinker who had ever lived. As it is he is merely comic."¹

Reality of the Inner Life

In his *Journals* Kierkegaard reveals his inmost thoughts to us, and his reasons for leading his intellectual life the way he did. As a young man of 22, we find him searching for a personal truth to govern his reason for being. In his search he turned to theism and Christianity, not having matured

in a cultural setting which would have exposed him to Eastern philosophy or those influenced by it. Nevertheless, he still was able to form a life pattern based upon admirable spiritual ideals. What was most essential in human life was not at all difficult for him to discern:

"It is the divine side of man, his inward action which means everything, not a mass of information . . . One must know oneself before knowing anything else . . . It is only after a man has thus understood himself inwardly, and has thus seen his way, that life acquires peace and significance; only then is he rid of that tiresome, ill-omened fellow-traveller, the irony of life, which shows itself in the sphere of understanding, bidding true understanding begin with ignorance (Socrates) like God creating the world out of nothing." 2

The young Kierkegaard was a serious, inward sort of person. He had experienced much melancholy from his family life and—still later—from a broken engagement. He had become increasingly unimpressed with the superficiality and hypocrisy of those about him, in fact, quite sensitive to their apparent insensitivity towards him and what he valued:

"I have but little to win or lose from the ordinary run of men. Partly because everything which occupies them—so called practical life—only interests me slightly; partly because the coldness and lack of interest with which they treat the more profound and spiritual emotions in man have estranged me still further." 3

He carried over this criticism even to those with whom he socialized most frequently. How often have many of us harboured identical feelings? Life at best has its limitations, and Kierkegaard was one who lived for what he deemed most essential in his daily personal existence.

The Self in *Sickness Unto Death* (1849)

Kierkegaard found much satisfaction in

his literary undertakings, and we can certainly regard them as a whole as aids in the development of spiritual and self-awareness. In his work *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard presents us with a moving examination of an emotion that he was quite familiar with—despair. The book is of a religious character, with particular emphasis upon the individual self.

Despair is defined as the "sickness unto death". Kierkegaard conceives of it in the following three-fold manner:

"Despair is a sickness in the Spirit, in the Self, and so It May Assume a Triple Form: in Despair at Not Being Conscious of Having a Self (Despair improperly So Called); in Despair at Not Willing to Be Oneself; in Despair at Willing to Be Oneself." 4

The self is, in Kierkegaard's words, simply "spirit". It is when he proceeds to define it as a "relation" or a "synthesis" that it becomes somewhat obscure to us. As a matter of fact, Kierkegaard sees man as being both a "relation" and a "synthesis" before he is actually a "self". Thus he writes: "Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self." 5. Despite his differences with Hegel, the foregoing words clearly indicate his continuing influence upon Kierkegaard, who was then 46. The basic conception of thesis-antithesis-synthesis is Hegelian.

According to Kierkegaard, man does become a self eventually, but this is only when a third term enters the picture, i.e., the human self as "a relation which relates itself to its own self." The human self is also able to relate itself to another and, in so doing, allows for the two forms of despair, i.e., "despair at not willing to be oneself" and "despair at willing to be oneself." Kierkegaard maintains that there is a "Power" which keeps the self in "equil-

ibrium" and "rest," accordingly, the first form of despair is not the only form despair can take. Moreover, there is a way out of all despair and this consists in the self "relating itself to its own self and by willing to be itself."⁶ It is this emphasis upon a "Power" or God that distinguishes Kierkegaard's brand of theological existentialism from the current day varieties espoused by Jean Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger, which are atheistic. Sartre, in particular, disavows any dependence of man upon any theistic Divine Power, by maintaining that human existence *precedes* essence. It would appear, from this writer's perspective, that there is a possibility for yet a third variety of existentialism: the Theosophical, but only by philosophers and theologians coming to the realization that mysticism is preferable to either theism or atheism. Theosophy should be studied, because it teaches that behind all that exists there is an impersonal Ultimate Principle and that the only personal God which man can ever know is his own Atman or Higher Self.

The True Christian: Is He To Be Found?

A reflective clergyman, Kierkegaard was aware of the differences between his fellow countrymen and the early Christians. A reading of the New Testament made this all the more apparent. Both lead their lives differently, so he thought, in a "qualitative" sense. Philosophically, he thought the principal difference could be detected in the displacement of the "absolute" by "reason." This seems to be as true today, as in his age. Society has become increasingly secular and materialistic, with the spiritual side of man almost completely subservient to the intellectual. Kierkegaard was so disillusioned that he thought the true spiritual man of the Christian type was extinct:

"... the kind of men Christianity has in mind no longer exist; on the average the human race has progressed, but there are no more individuals who could bear Christianity. That in my opinion is where

we stand. And again it is my belief that the race must go through reason to the absolute."⁷

Man must indeed go "through reason to the absolute" via his spiritual intuition. And he is not only able to do so by paradox, as Kierkegaard thought, but by analogy, i.e., the Hermetic teaching "as above, so below." A transcending of the commonly accepted literal interpretation of the New Testament would also appear to be desirable, if not necessary. Biblical allegories and symbolism conceal many vital truths, which Theosophy has long recognized and represented.

One cannot leave Kierkegaard without feeling that despite his conceptual limitations, he possessed much real genius and understanding. Of this he was also aware, as the following words indicate:

"And so now I am enriched by a loving providence with an eminent understanding of truth, such as has seldom been given to a man, and moreover armed by the same loving providence with outstanding gifts with which to set forth what I have understood. In that respect I only have to humble myself beneath one thing: the fact that I have not the strength myself to be that which is understood."⁸

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- 1 Kierkegaard, Soren. *The Journals of Kierkegaard*. Edited by Alexander Dru. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959, pp. 90-91.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp. 47.
- 4 Kierkegaard, Soren. *Fear and Trembling and The Sickness Unto Death*. Translated by Walter Lowrie. A Doubleday Anchor Book. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954, p. 146.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 146.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp. 147.
- 7 Kierkegaard, *Op. cit.*, pp. 119-120.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-169.

PRAYER — AN AFFIRMATION

MONTAGUE A. MACHELL

Prayer, a direction of the heart, is a positive and active approach to the hidden treasury of universal experience. — Lama Anagarika Govinda.

An entire life-time of honest, fearless self-search is sometimes insufficient to change the basic pattern of living from "Inspired Floundering" to Conscious Growth. So far have we wandered from our basic spiritual foundations that we have even built a so-called "science" out of our directionless patterns of illusion. Most of us, like vulnerable straws waving in the wind, not only know the wind is blowing, but are blissfully ignorant of its nature and direction. We merely and fatuously "wave"—feeble and meaningless "straws"! With a wailing and gnashing of teeth, we bemoan "what life does to us", all unaware that most of us have yet to discover "life" and have far to go ere we *embody* it. As a result, in our moments of most abject confusion, we cry aloud for help and guidance, having successfully fostered a complete ignorance of the source of help *within us*—our spiritual roots!

As Alan Watts observes in *The Supreme Identity*, "The modern mind suffers from the old prejudice that consciousness is a purely superficial outgrowth of reality, and that the more fundamental the power, principle or substance becomes, the more blind and unconscious it must be."

Oh, for a confession of faith with the spiritual fortitude to parallel the poet's battle-cry:

"I am Memnon! I am he that calleth upon the Dawn!"

Of what use is it to beg for help, for protection, for enlightenment, if the petitioner knows not whom he shall apply to? What sense is there in *begging for anything* until one has at least instituted a genuine inventory of his own deepest resources, his own undiscovered potentialities? And yet, in nine cases out of ten, "prayer" too often

expresses an unjustified expectation that some higher power will take over the job of *living*, for which we were originally equipped and placed here to carry out intelligently.

How refreshing these words of Anagarika Govinda: "Prayer thus arises from a *state of creative tension* between the human and the divine, the consciousness of incompleteness between the present state of ignorance or delusion and the longed for, future state of liberation." In other words, prayer is an irrepressible acknowledgment of the "drive to Growth" native to the deepest heart of man. Once he achieves contact with his holiest Self, he discovers Its yearning for liberation from the barriers of the inconstant, unperceptive physical personality. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna is rather emphatic in his reference to the "nature of things":

"All creatures act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect? In every purpose of the senses are fixed affection and dislike. A wise man should not fall in the power of these two passions, for they are the enemies of man."

The "wise man"—he who has made contact with his basic spiritual nature—is aware of this pitfall. His "prayer" is not a petition to some outside deliverer to "save" him from his own confused compromises, but a clarion-call *affirmation* of conscious spiritual choice. If it asks for anything, it is for help to make that choice still more positive, still more effective and worthy a gesture of dedication to the Supreme.

We are, likewise, reminded by Krishna of the "affection and dislike" inherent "in every purpose of the senses", a form of motivation none of us can afford to underestimate. Only the Spiritual Self, with limit-

less vision fixed upon universal goals—the good of ALL—lives, moves and has its being *above* the sense-drives of the un-wise (unenlightened) man. To allow oneself to dwell on the lower level, and there “pray” to be lifted up, is likely to prove rather futile. First, let the disciple *lift himself up* to his native plane of spiritual aspiration; on that plane he renders himself accessible to help from the Lords of that plane.

In the long and difficult climb out of sheer physicality and desire the disciple’s most effective prayer must take the form of a faithful and consistent *meditation* upon the goal and patterns of his own hungering and aspiring spiritual self. In such meditations the sacred scriptures are priceless and indispensable aids. However dim-lit the mind and imagination, the Self draws strength and nourishment from sublime ideas that are in themselves an affirmation of Its native state.

All prayer, probably, has birth in a *reaching up* to one’s own native spirituality —“calling upon the Dawn” of one’s clouded splendor. This conscious aspiration, nourished by voluntary reading and meditation, achieves a very necessary polarization of the nature toward living, spiritual values. Such polarization is one more step towards conscious self-identification with the Supreme.

“The man who is endued with this devotion and who seeth the unity of all things perceiveth the Supreme Soul . . .

He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseneth not his hold on me and I forsake him not.”—*Bhagavad Gita*

The disciple who “seeth the unity of all things” naturally lets go of that cherished sin of Separateness. He approaches the state of *being one with all*, in which there can be no more, “asking for” or “getting”. Steeped in the holy waters of renunciation, the blessed tides of universal fulfilment bear him forward. Laved in the beauty and mystery of a sublime spiritual Karma, the soul of him becomes inseparable from the

mystical Tides of Life Eternal. His prayer is an affirmation of his readiness to *be used* in the Great Design: “Make me an instrument of Thy Peace”, as St. Francis of Assisi implored.

Desire, no matter how lofty, is now extraneous. The disciple, a lesser Administrator of Benediction, lives but to GIVE. (“To live to benefit mankind is the *first* step”.) As Santideva would have him pray: “I am without merits and therefore very poor. I have nothing else for their worship. May, therefore, the Perfect Ones, who have no other thought but the welfare of others, may they accept this instrument of their peace, for my sake.” For, as Anagarika Govinda points out, “Prayer is an act of opening the heart and mind”; and while we open ourselves we do not only allow the light to enter, but we make the first breach in the walls of our self-created prison, which separated us from fellow-beings.

Let us, through this dramatized form of meditation, obey “the direction of the heart” in a perfect Prayer of Dedication to THE ONE, giving all, asking nothing!

“O, My Divinity! Thou dost blend with the earth and fashion for thyself temples of mighty power!

“O, My Divinity! Thou lovest in the heart life of all things and dost radiate a golden light that shineth forever and doth illumine even the darkest corners of the earth!

“O, My Divinity! Blend Thou with me, that from the corruptible I may become incorruptible; that from imperfection I may become perfection; that from darkness I may go forth in light!”

Prayer is an ennobling action when it is an intense feeling, an ardent desire rushing forth from our very heart, for the good of other people, and when entirely detached from any selfish personal object . . .

—H. P. Blavatsky

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

On behalf of the members of The Theosophical Society in Canada I have sent a message of sympathy to Mr. N. Sri Ram, President, on the death of his wife, Mrs. Bhaghirithi Sri Ram. Mrs. Sri Ram died in India in June, while the President was still in the United States, recuperating from his operation.

The President remained at Wheaton for the Convention and Summer School of the Theosophical Society in America. He expected to be back in Adyar on July 31. Before he left the continent he wrote to say that his health is improving rapidly—which is welcome news to all.

* * *

I regret to report the death on August 22 of Mrs. Nellie Corcoran. Mrs. Corcoran joined the Toronto Lodge in 1964, but had been actively interested in the Society for many years prior to that time. She will be missed by her relatives and friends, to whom I extend my sincere sympathy.

* * *

Her many friends will be sorry to hear that Mrs. Kathleen Marks, President of the Phoenix Lodge in Hamilton, was seriously injured in a highway accident recently.

Mrs. Marks was travelling in a bus in company with fellow members of a professional association to which she belongs. Their destination was Europe, and they were on their way to Montreal airport when the accident happened.

It is understood that Mrs. Marks suffered severe back and other injuries. I know that all members will join me in wishing her a speedy recovery.

* * *

I have much pleasure in welcoming into the fellowship of the Society Mr. William W. Orchard, of St. Thomas Lodge.

By way of explanation to our readers outside Canada: the last issue of *The Canadian Theosophist* was unavoidably delayed in transit by more than a month due to a national postal strike. When it was evident the strike would definitely be called every effort was made to advance our mailing date, but an embargo was imposed on second-class matter and was not lifted until several days after the postmen had returned to work.

The same strike has inevitably affected the present issue. Material expected from various sources failed to arrive before the printing deadline.

In many countries the very idea of a postal strike would be unheard of. It is only recently that public service employees in Canada have been given the right to strike, and the citizens' first major experience of that right put into action has not been a happy one. Regardless of the pros and cons, the strike highlighted a facet of the social scene in Canada today—the spiral effect of wages chasing a rising cost of living. Generally speaking Canadians enjoy an enviable standard of living, but when one group gains, another must suffer, and those living on fixed incomes always come out worst off.

* * *

The Annual Meeting of the Theosophical Society in Canada was held at 310 Dupont Street, Toronto, on Sunday afternoon July 7, with the following members present: Miss M. Seaton, Messrs. C. Bunting, L. Dadswell, G. Gardiner and C. Weaver; R. A. Webb, Treasurer, and the General Secretary.

Mr. Dudley W. Barr, past General Secretary, was also present. He was warmly welcomed by the new committee, and his ex officio membership on the Executive was unanimously requested.

For many years the Theosophical Society in Canada has occupied office and storage space in the Toronto Lodge quarters for no consideration. At the time of the move from 52 Isabella Street to the temporary

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All letters to the Editors, articles and reports for publication should be addressed to the Editors, 310 Dupont St., Toronto 4.

Editors: Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Davy

Letters intended for publication should be restricted to not more than five hundred words.

The editors reserve the right to shorten any letter unless the writer states that it must be published in full or not at all.

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quarters at 310 Dupont Street, the Executive requested the Directors of the Lodge to estimate a fair rental for the space we use. A nominal figure has been agreed upon

and I am sure that members across Canada will approve that the burden has thus been more equitably distributed.

Mr. Ralph A. Webb was again nominated as Treasurer for the Theosophical Society in Canada for the year 1968-69. Mr. Barr expressed his personal appreciation for the work that had been done by Mr. Webb during his long term of office.

I am also able to attest to Mr. Webb's outstanding efficiency and application. The Society is indeed fortunate in having this important office filled by a person of his ability.

* * *

The Summer, 1968 issue of *Theosophia* contains biographical sketches of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Col. Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge. It also includes important articles by these three Founders of the Theosophical Movement, and two others on *The Secret Doctrine*. It is not only an interesting issue in its own right, but it also serves as a handy reference document—very useful at times like the present when enquiries are sparked by false statements in the popular press.

Extra copies have been obtained for distribution among Canadian Lodges, and I have also sent them to the major newspapers in Toronto, to the CBC, and, of course, to the Canadian editors of *Time* magazine.

A subscription to *Theosophia* (four issues) is \$2.00 per year. The address is 551 South Oxford Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90005.

* * *

The attention of Canadian readers is drawn to the September issue of *Maclean's* magazine, which contains an article entitled, "Science in the Wide, Weird World of Psi".

Liberally applied ridicule is usually a feature of popular articles on "the unexplained laws of nature" but this one is written with a refreshingly open-minded approach to the subject. It contains an interview with Dr. Karlis Osis, Director of the American Society of Psychological Research,

and follows with five different examples of current scientific involvement with strange phenomena. These include telepathy, astral projection, dream-influence, and improved plant growth through the use of sound.

All in all, the examples bear out an editorial observation that "... the square, skeptical world of science is finally beginning to regard the mysterious world of Psi (for psychic), in fact all things supernatural, as a legitimate field of enquiry."

—T.G.D.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

The Editors,

The Canadian Theosophist

It was doubtless with partial kindly intent that Miss H. Zahara offered the advice she gave to the Editors as to the management of our journal, *The Canadian Theosophist*.

When Miss Zahara returned to America, after the disgraceful E.S. attack on Dr. Smith, we hoped to find in her a fighter for the esoteric teaching of the Masters, but it is sadly disappointing to us to have to recognize that the past General Secretary of the Australian Section has relinquished the freedom of expression which she exercised in that position. For there she occasionally presented both sides of questions of moment to the Society in her magazine.

Now, alas, it is clear that she backs up the "party line" even to the extent of whitewashing Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, whose peculiar methods of teaching boys would obviously preclude his success as a probationary chela. Reliance upon his clairvoyant pronouncements rests wholly upon his own absurd, and totally unsupported, claims to be a High Initiate; whilst the imaginative nature of his clairvoyance has already been amply demonstrated.

There are two irreconcilable teachings put forward as Theosophy in our Society:

Theosophy, the teaching of the Masters, and Neo-Theosophy, which rests squarely on the psychic revelations of C. W. Leadbeater. Every spiritual teaching has its shadow, a distorted travesty of itself.

We are sorry that Miss Zahara no longer finds herself amongst those who desire to preserve the truth from desecration.

In conclusion may we refer Miss Zahara to the article, "Out in the Open" in the July-Aug. issue, for a clear exposition of our attitude as Seekers for Truth, above comfort.

W. E. Wilks
Orpheus Lodge

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors,

The Canadian Theosophist

In his letter in your issue of May-June, 1968, your correspondent Victor A. Endersby fails to demonstrate any inaccuracy in Mr. N. Sri Ram's contention that C. W. Leadbeater "was never in trouble with the police". In colloquial usage, to be in trouble with the police is to expect prosecution. All that C. W. Leadbeater seems to have suffered from the Australian police was that they entertained some smutty gossip about him and were inclined to attribute to him a degree of sexual prowess which would have been surprising indeed in a person well past his middle seventies, as Bishop Leadbeater was in 1922. They would have prosecuted him if they could. Lacking evidence they did not do so.

Even in quite recent times authorities in Australia have earned a reputation for unstable and reactionary behaviour on matters connected with sex. It is certainly not a subject on which one would always be wise to accept the opinion of even the most virtuous "dick" or "flatty", even if he was a "dinkum Aussie".

Mr. Endersby's citing of details about the attack on C. W. Leadbeater in 1906 simply illustrates what a different world people lived in then. The very advice which C. W. Leadbeater was then denounced for giving to young people is now found freely

given in nearly any up-to-date book about sex. See, for example, such a book as the fairly recent best-selling and internationally available *An ABZ of Love* by Inge and Sten Hegeler. Or see a much older book, *The Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge*, edited by Dr. Norman Haire, published as long ago as 1934, which devoted a whole chapter largely to denouncing as unsound, unhealthy and mendacious the very line taken by those who denounced Leadbeater in 1906. Of the thousands of Americans interviewed by Professor Kinsey in preparation of his reports of 1948 and 1953, 62 per cent of the women and 93 per cent of the men reported that they had at some time put into practice what C. W. Leadbeater was denounced for proposing in 1906.

Mr. Endersby used the expression "sexual perversion". We know today that there is no such thing. We begin life as "polymorphous perverts", to use the rather comical Freudian term, with our sexual potential not organised to any special pattern or oriented to any special objective and so capable of being canalised in many different ways. As we grow up we acquire a pattern, but no two people have quite the same pattern in this respect. For at least one in twenty the pattern will be homosexual, and a homosexual ingredient will play a more or less important part in the supposedly heterosexual lives of many of the rest. According to Kinsey 37 per cent of American males reported having had sexual relations with male partners. There will also be a wide variety of fixation to sexual objectives which are not really "hetero" or "homo" but have a symbolic relationship to some past experience. And heterosexual aims and activities are astonishingly varied. There is no norm by which one can say that some particular pattern of sexual behaviour is to be regarded as normal and that deviations from it may be denounced as perversions.

A highly significant point about the controversy of 1906 was that those who raised objections to what C. W. Leadbeater taught

young people about sex did not include the parents of those young people. The objectors were busy-bodies who had no direct concern in the matter.

Mrs. Besant seems never to have achieved a happy adjustment to the realities of sex. It is clear from her autobiography that she was brought up with a morbidly unrealistic view of it. Without any of the premarital experiment or other sources of enlightenment which a normal girl of her class would seek today, she made an early traumatic marriage, out of a sense of duty, to a man she was not in love with. She took refuge in a rigid puritanism. She thus raised acute problems for some of her pupils and associates and in 1906 she treated C. W. Leadbeater very badly as she later partly realized.

To C. W. Leadbeater we should be grateful for letting in the light of simple humane common sense for a generation that had lost its way in this matter. He has also done much to ensure that the brotherhood which we profess in our Society precludes depreciative rag-picking in each other's private lives.

Hugh Shearman

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors

The Canadian Theosophist

All members are, of course, entitled to rely on their own judgement on various matters, and . . . many of us may not agree with Mr. V. A. Endersby's letter (C.T. May-June, 1968).

I do, however, wish to make a strong protest against a defamatory article such as this appearing in a Theosophical magazine, directed at a man who died 34 years ago. Material such as this in a Theosophical journal is neither calculated to convince others of our sincerity as champions of the principle of Universal Brotherhood, nor likely to attract sincere, honest and intelli-

gent seekers for the Truth into our Society.

In the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky gave us three fundamental propositions on which to meditate, study and base our action. Surely our time would be far more profitably spent in endeavouring to apply these basic principles in our own lives, and to the spreading of the Theosophical truth in our present day, rather than tilting at by-gone windmills, which have long since ceased to turn.

Norman S. Hankin

☆ ☆ ☆

The Editors, ---

The Canadian Theosophist

An article, "The Proper Presentation of Theosophy", by W. E. Wilks (*The Canadian Theosophist*, March-April, 1968) has been reprinted in the English Section's *The Theosophical Journal*. It says, in reference to my book, *Theosophy — What's It All About?*, that I follow "the same method of avoiding mention of any definite source for this entirely new knowledge. . ." Dr. Wilks must have missed what I said in Chapter I, pp 7 and 8. Here I acknowledge my source as H.P.B.'s *The Secret Doctrine* quite clearly.

With regard to Dr. Wilks' impassioned plea, "Why, oh why, do we not honestly relate Theosophy to the Masters and no longer use all sorts of subterfuges with regard to its origin?" the short answer is that it is clear to anyone who reads *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* that the Masters did not want undue notice taken of their "poor selves". They obviously wanted Theosophy to stand, in reason or its own feet so to speak. To bring them in would be to risk enquiry into who or what they were. This is turn would re-open the whole subject of wonder-working and phenomena which, until it is commonly accepted, could do nothing but bring discredit (even ridicule) on to Theosophy and the Society again.

Geoffrey Farthing

HEART TRANSPLANTS OF A DIFFERENT KIND

The following letter was published recently in the *San Diego Union* newspaper. Headlines feature an occasionally successful transplanting of healthy hearts into diseased bodies with rare technical skill, with good motives no doubt, but with what wisdom is open to question.

With less skill, but with unimpeachable motive and with wisdom that should be self-evident to any right-thinking person, I suggest that of infinitely greater service to the whole human race would be the transplanting metaphorically into millions of hearts diseased with ignorance, ill-will and lust for power, a few of the simple but sublime attributes taught universally by the great spiritual teachers of mankind in all ages—namely, understanding, good will and generosity.

Just an idea! But ideas eventually rule the world, despite man's blindness.

Iverson L. Harris

HOW BRAVE . . . A ROSE!

If a rose could see its withered bloom,
In its budding hours . . . it would die of
gloom.

It passes towards it in perfumed joy,
Living its life for all who pass by.

So may we give, whilst here we live,
All of the joy that is ours to give,
Enjoying those moments of peaceful self-
giving,
With never a thought to the end of living.

For Nature will mother us like whispering
rain,
Drawing us to her, to release us again,
To bloom in a garden, even more fair,
Delighting our loved ones who wait for us
there.

—Charles R. Carter

SEQUEL TO THE SIRHAN AFFAIR

The report in our last issue of the events that followed the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy was necessarily brief. As far as our limited facilities are concerned, it was the nearest equivalent to a "stop-press" situation, and we were hampered for want of complete news.

Correspondence from several friends and readers in the United States has since revealed that the spontaneous interest (following the assassination) of the news media in the Theosophical Movement, particularly in the life of H. P. Blavatsky, had far-reaching effects. Thanks to the efforts of many individuals, the outcome, though serious enough, was not disastrous.

A strange report added fuel to the fire. It was the "disclosure", over national TV networks and elsewhere, that Madame Blavatsky was the author of a *Manual for Revolutionaries*. This document was said to advocate the overthrow of government by the systematic assassination of prominent statesmen. At a time of considerable public emotional crisis, such an accusation could have precipitated grave consequences.

Now few of the outstanding figures of the nineteenth century are represented today with comprehensive collections of their writings—even down to miscellaneous letters—as is H. P. Blavatsky. Those who are familiar with the content of her work would know without question that the last thing she could be responsible for was a manual for revolutionaries. But the false identification had been made, and the public would, as likely as not, accept the statement as factual—the more so because of its sensational nature.

Essential research was necessary so that the lie could be given to what amounted to a charge that Madame Blavatsky was a dyed-in-the-wool anarchist. Who did write the *Manual*?

Investigations in New York and at the

University of California produced the necessary facts. Mr. Boris de Zirkoff was able to compile—within a matter of days—a description of the work and its real authors. (The Editors will be pleased to provide a copy of his report on request. But briefly for the record, the individual responsible for the inciting document was a Russian anarchist named M. A. Bukunin (1814-1876).)

Others joined the counter-attack. The Blavatsky Foundation wrote at length to Mr. Truman Capote, a well-known writer, who was responsible for a vicious calumny of Madame Blavatsky, including laying the authorship of the *Manual for Revolutionaries* at her door. A general press release showing Capote in his true light, and answering slanders from other sources, was put out by the Foundation. The release is well documented with facts that reveal the fantastic nature of the accusations. Of particular interest is the inclusion of seven quotations covering a long span of H.P.B.'s Theosophical career, expressing her views on such matters as assassination, murder, revolution and politics.

Had this been the end of the affair, perhaps the defenders of Madame Blavatsky might have gone back to their various Theosophical commitments, and the public's interest would have been diverted to other sensational items by reporters who seem only too anxious to provide scandal, and, as shown in the present case, are not above fabricating it if they feel like it. But there was an enemy battleship on the horizon, heavy guns trained—again—on H.P.B.

Just what possessed *Time* magazine to assign, edit and print the article that appeared on page 59 of its July 19 issue is beyond comprehension. *Time*, a journal with research facilities that are probably unmatched anywhere in the world; a journal that is published weekly, so at least is not

pressured by urgent deadlines as are the newspapers, radio and television; but a journal that nevertheless could publish an unauthenticated, unwarranted smear—this might be expected of the gutter press, but not of a responsible news magazine.

Coupled with a brief report on the Annual Convention of The Theosophical Society in America (“. . . a mysterious non-Christian movement often suspected of being more occult than cult”) the article went on to malign Madame Blavatsky in the most libellous fashion—and for good measure threw in a wonderfully distorted capsule of what Theosophy is. Needless and sad to say, the libels have been copied in whole or in part by less prestigious media.

Many letters were sent to *Time* from Madame Blavatsky’s followers all over the world. One of them, from a Canadian Lodge, is reprinted at the end of this report.

But these attempts cannot hope to repair all the damage that has been done. Other methods are necessary and must be used vigorously—for years if necessary.

One very effective means of reaching a large public with a reasoned message was adopted by the Theosophy Company. This organization has placed large (7” x 10”) advertisements in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The ad lists Madame Blavatsky’s principal works, and comments briefly on them. “Students of Madame Blavatsky,” reads the Theosophy Company’s message, “often conclude that she was a person of extraordinary attainments, but no one who reveres her memory would dream of “boasting” about them. Time, and a more enlightened age than the present will take care of such matters.”

It might be months, if not years, before the full effect of this summer’s events will be completely discernible. On the one hand, the enquiries that have been generated by all the uncalled for publicity might produce a lasting interest among a few, and this will be good. On the other hand, millions of people have been exposed to a negative

and false presentation of H.P.B. and Theosophy, and this is bad. These events are a test for us all, and on our own actions now will depend whether the good will outweigh the bad.

Letter to *Time*

The Editor,
Time Magazine.

It must seem strange that every few years since her death 77 years ago there has appeared a book, or articles in a magazine or newspaper (such as that which you printed in your July 19 issue) containing scurrilous statements the general effect of which is to brand Madame H. P. Blavatsky as a sort of wanton adventuress with at least one illegitimate child.

Actual medical testimony showed that she had not and could not bear a child, and the true story of her life showed that she was an adventuress only in that she adventured where few others had the courage and the power to follow.

She was the great woman genius of her generation in literature, and by making available for the first time in Western history a complete philosophy of life for all to examine and prove out and use, if they had the will and courage to do so.

A few months before her death in May, 1891, one such attack on her personal life was published in the *New York Sun*, the largest paper at the time in the United States.

Immediately through her friend and co-worker, W. Q. Judge, a New York lawyer, she instituted a libel action. Seeking reliable evidence to prove even one of the many charges made, the *Sun* paper delayed proceedings, and then H. P. Blavatsky died, which perforce brought the action to an end. The *New York Sun* then made the amende honorable by publicly stating that it had failed to confirm any of the charges and apologized. Moreover, it also opened its columns to a concise and accurate account of her life written by W. Q. Judge. This has not prevented a continuance of

these calumnies throughout the succeeding years.

Why was she hated by the orthodox during her life, a hatred which continues long after her death?

She was taught and trained in Thibet by a number of Adepts, members of a secret Brotherhood there, and she was sent out to make available to all men some of the Secret Wisdom of this Brotherhood. She accepted the mission, knowing that it meant her martyrdom, for she had to attack and show up cant and hypocrisy wherever they existed. She had to show up the cocksure complacency and materialism of 19th century science which believed it had almost reached the end of all possible knowledge and she had to attack the bigotry and superstition of organized religion, not only of Christianity, but of all religions. The orthodox world naturally rebelled and sought to stop her work, not by trying to disprove the philosophy she brought, but by attempting to destroy her personal reputation. Because her books are more widely read today than ever, this hatred persists.

In the short space of her mission of 15 years her literary output was prodigious.

Her Collected Writings from public journals form ten large volumes. Her books: *Isis Unveiled*, a two-volume work, criticizing science and religion and tentatively introducing Theosophy, the teaching she gave much more fully in her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*, in two, three or five volumes in different editions. It is an acknowledged fact that no one else either then or now has had the knowledge and erudition to write such a book as her *Secret Doctrine*. No honest man can read merely the opening chapters of this book and believe her to be the adventuress and liar, and spy, and imposter, her enemies claim her to be. The wisdom she brought enables Man to know something of himself and his relation to his fellows and the Universe. It focuses attention on one fact, the Universal Brotherhood of all men without any distinction whatever, and to show the way by which each individual can reach that perception of Brotherhood, so that it can become the one all-embracing reality in his life.

W. E. Wilks

for Orpheus Lodge

The Theosophical Society in Canada

“THE SECRET DOCTRINE”

KENNETH MORRIS

If the spiritual climate of Earth is to change from the old storminess of War to sunlit serenities of Peace, a change must come in fundamental ideas: we must see into the heart, and not be fobbed off with the husks, of Religion.

The generations of our fathers nourished their inner life upon the Bible. From the time of the Protestant Reformation until the beginnings of our own day, that was the source to which they went for all certainty, for illumination, for the assurance of truth. It was a word from beyond the world, a revelation: the Dictate of Deity: to be searched, but not critically; never to be

questioned. It was the reservoir of comfort, the one place from which sure comfort might be drawn.

The Leak In The Dike

But time makes away with all his children; and time in these last decades has laid rough hands on the Bible. Men of research arose, who discovered fact incompatible with the supposed revelation—more and more of fact, and confronted believing Christendom therewith; so that men were given choice which they should discard, which cleave to: palpable fact to which their own seven senses could testify, or the Book their predecessors had adored; and it was, as

they say, Hobson's choice, fact being so stubbornly incontrovertible: individual men could hold out in belief, but not generations; a leak was in the dike, and the fields doomed to submersion; one flaw being discovered, the imperishable rock of Holy Scripture was crumbling; and Christendom, "the People of a Book" in Mohammed's phrase, was threatened with shelterless booklessness, and adrift in a cold unspiritual universe. So the sterile ugly materialism of the last century rose up; blighting, because allowing no place for, the beautiful side of life.

The More Imperial Revelation

And then came a Prophet with a new revelation. Then came H. P. Blavatsky with the New Book, *The Secret Doctrine*, not to destroy but to fulfil, the work and mission of the Bible. Behold, there was truth in the Old Book after all: it was not to be discarded; it was not the mere ignorant guesses and forgeries of an ignorant age; it was, at the root, the wisdom of men whose wisdom was real, and much greater than scientific materialism, couched by them in such limitations of form and idea as could help the mentality of a limited age; but here, now—now that knowledge had flooded in, and conceptions must grow and have new food or starve—here now was the Book of Explanations, the larger more imperial revelation; an assertion of spirituality that could meet scientific materialism in the field and overthrow it; that could take account of every fact telescope and microscope and crucible might reveal, and only show it in its own place in the robe and external manifestation of the spirit; here was the vindication of all true religion; infallible comfort for the secretest noble cravings in the heart of man. The human spirit, inexhaustible in its demand for generosity and mystery and beauty, need fear no more the cold barren abominations of Gradgrindism; the noblest teachings that had been heard on earth were, all simply, the truest. Here was the great Book of the future ages, *The Secret Doctrine*, to prove it.

It was a challenge to all the provinces of the Universe; it was a bugle blown against the Jerichoes of desolating selfishness; a tiger-roar loosed against materialism; it was the opening up of vistas illimitably beautiful for the spirit; a new planet swum into the ken of humanity. With the publishing of that Book, a new Age of Faith, more splendid than any of the old ones, was ushered in.

The Reality

A new Age of Faith; for here, in *The Secret Doctrine*, with what a new bearing, very royal and warriorlike, Faith appears! It is no longer a thing to be praised as unshakable; it is no longer a thing on its defense. It wields swords of lightnings now, and crouches behind no timorous shield and buckler. Its war-cry is that it will have a royal world of this world; the Kingdom and the glory established upon earth; the beautiful dignity of Eternity here upon this bank and shoal of time. Not after death, nor afar beyond the starry constellations, shall that splendor be manifest; but here and now Man is the Soul, his divinity discoverable now; his immortality an inheritance to be entered upon momentarily and daily. For the lure of some diviner drink to fill the cup when crumbled into dust, we are offered this universe brimming now with strangest beauty, and every day a divine adventure: Godhead not remote or tyrannical, but a star in the inmost heart of every man, a potentiality developable in each life. Will you have Golconda? Will you have the wealth of the fabulous Indies: the gold of Ophir, the peacocks and the ivory? They are within and able to be discovered there, says *The Secret Doctrine*; and challenges the human spirit itself to prove that it is true; leading you to the great heights and the treasuries of existence from the next moment and the next incident in your daily duty; indicating riches within yourself more incalculable than the number of the stars. Will you walk in a universal Eden, yourself a God? This may be, says *The Secret Doctrine*; and with fire from heaven kindles

you into vision that, since you are human, the ordainment of it is within your power. A golden inspiration here; means illimitable for quickening the spirit. For this Book shows a man himself as he knows himself now, but a tiny fragment and inconsiderable planet in the vast system of his greater self: this of you that was born and shall die but the one corner or the shadow of that of you, the Reality, which was before the stars were set flaming, and shall be after the freezing of the sun.

The Divine Adventure

Life and every day of it a divine adventure. I put myself into the mind of the miserable on earth: of the workless man who, loaded with anxiety, has to grapple naked with that most dreadful of adversaries, time: I ask myself what it is that *The Secret Doctrine* has for him. Well; it has the armor and the weapons that can bring him through. He is no longer to suppose that some cold paternal deity on high is tormenting him for no purpose or for purposes he cannot understand. He is no longer to see himself under the cat-claws of a senseless unconscious fate or chance. He is reminded instead of his own Godhead: which all life's business is, to bring out from its obscurity. All life's business; and therefore that of the very slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that oppress him. The hideous anxiety that he faces; inexorable time itself: are only there waiting to be faced without fear; with a certain gaiety of trust proper to Godhead; he has but to bring against them that weapon out of his own secret armory; and he must bring it: they stand there, time and anxiety, in reality beseeching him: Find the way into the place where your Godhead is, into the beautiful armories of the Soul; confront us with what we desire to see, your Divinity; there is no quieting us else! So hell itself evokes heaven; but the thing is, and that which *The Secret Doctrine* reveals, that heaven is there, right within a man's own being; the last highest possibilities are there; you have to pray to nothing afar and whose attention

is probably wandering. Against ill fortune, temporary and limited however appalling it may seem, you have it in your power to put up an endurance limitless and eternal. A man may always be greater than any possible ill that comes against him; in the night and jungle of this disaster-haunted world, all that the wild beasts are roaring at him is this: Trust, you fool! and you are our master.

Man's New Mission

And he may; because being in essence Godhead, it is his nature to be evoked by misfortune; to bring out unsuspectable strength at last to oppose what oppresses him. What we suffer is the result of what we have done: with age-long foolish action we have hidden our divinity away; with sharp pangs now we must be driven to re-discover it; but in all this universe there is none that punishes and no idea of punishment; our own Godhead ordains, for our own dignity's sake, that we shall undo our own undoing with these pains. So hell comes auxiliary to heaven; we are not called on to endure more than armed with confidence we can endure. Karma, which is the innate property of existence by which existence adjusts itself and maintains its harmony, is in its nature absolute mercy. It takes the shortest paths and the effectual means to its ends; and marshals life and time and circumstance before the Soul of man, just to tempt and lure the hidden beauty of the Soul into manifestation. Here then is what breeds infinite comfort; because infinite courage; and this is the new self of you that *The Secret Doctrine* introduces to you: a being of such dignity that the only comfort acceptable to him is courage. And this is the new mission of which it convicts him: to make this world a better heaven than any of the New Jerusalems of the creeds; and this is the time it gives him in which to accomplish the work: Now; the limitless now that this instant is offering itself to him, and will be through all the ages to come.

The Theosophical Path—November 1923.

SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A. BARBORKA

Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this feature by sending their questions c/o The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.

Question. What actually reincarnates?

Answer. In view of the series of questions which follow this initial query, the simple answer that is usually appropriate is not sufficient in this case. The reason for this is that the process of "reincarnation" (that is, taking on again a body of flesh in the Earth sphere) is not a simple one.

Usually one who first contacts Theosophy regards "reincarnation" solely from the "form side" of the cosmos, which deals with a body. Such a querent has no knowledge of the "intelligence side" or the monadic aspect of either the macrocosm or the microcosm. On the other hand, a student of *The Secret Doctrine* regards both aspects mentioned, and therefore considers a question phrased in the above manner from two aspects.

(1) The aspect of the "form side." That which reincarnates is the resultant of the former personality's skandhas, which were implanted in the immortal portion of man's constitution, namely the Hiranyagarbha (usually rendered the Auric Egg). These skandhas pertain to each one of the seven principles of man's constitution. However, since humans focus most of their attention on the personality, the skandhas pertaining to the four lower principles (which comprise the personality, plus lower Manas) are predominant and spring into activity when a human being is born.

(2) The monadic aspect. That which reincarnates, described technically, is the upadhi of the monad, namely "Higher Manas," usually referred to as the Reincarnating Ego. While *upadhi* is usually

rendered "a vehicle," its literal meaning allows this rendering: "veil of spirit." The radiance of Atman thus illumines or shines through the upadhi.

At this point it would be well to refer to the Mahatma's answer to a question placed by Mr. Sinnett:

"The spiritual Ego . . . is continually evolving personalities?"

"The Spiritual *Ego* goes on evolving personalities, in which 'the sense of identity' is *very complete* while living. After their separation from the *physical Ego*, that sense returns very dim, and belongs wholly to the recollections of the physical man." (*The Mahatma Letters*, p. 174).

"Now these personalities I understand to be absolutely new evolutions in each case. A. P. Sinnett is, for what it is worth — absolutely a new invention?" (*ibid* 147)

"An error. A. P. Sinnett is *not* 'an absolutely *new* invention.' He is the child and creation of his antecedent personal self; the Karmic progeny . . ." (*ibid* p. 175)

Question. What becomes an Initiate? It was said earlier in answer to this question that it was the Personality. (C.T. July-Aug., 1967)

Answer. The reason that 'the personality' was given as the answer to the question: "What becomes an Initiate?" was because of the reply given by the Mahatma to A. P. Sinnett. Mahatma K. H. wrote:

"Immortal then is he, in the *panaeonic* immortality whose distinct consciousness and perception of *Self under whatever form* — undergoes no disjunction at

any time not for one second, during the period of his Egoship." (*ibid*, p. 129)

"Egoship" here signifies the personality, for it is the personality that does have "the perception of Self," and the Mahatma underlined "*under whatever form.*" Moreover, he refers to the personality as the Ego in this sentence:

"Suffice for you, for the present to know, that a man, an *Ego* like yours or mine, may be immortal from one to the other Round. Let us say I begin my immortality at the present fourth Round, i.e., having become a *full adept* (which unhappily I am not) I arrest the hand of Death at will, and when finally obliged to submit to it, my knowledge of the secrets of nature puts me in a position to retain my consciousness and distinct perception of Self as an object to my own reflective consciousness and cognition; and thus avoiding all such dismemberments of principles, that as a *rule* take place after the physical death of average humanity, I remain as Koothoomi in my *Ego* throughout the whole series of births and lives across the seven worlds . . . Unless I make the same efforts as I do now, to secure for myself another such furlough from Nature's Law, Koothoomi will vanish and may become a Mr. Smith or an innocent Babu, when his leave expires." (*ibid* pp 129-30)

In the quoted passage, the *Initiate* Koothoomi is referring to himself as an *Ego* — his personality. This is clearly indicated.

Question. (Continuing the previous question): It was said earlier that in answer to the query "What becomes an *Initiate*?" that it was the Personality, but it is a duality, a house divided against itself.

Answer. The suggestion is offered that it is a misapprehension to regard the personality as a duality. It is alone the *Manas* principle that becomes dual in manifestation; "for *Manas* alone there is no immortality possible" (*The Key to Theosophy*,

p. 164). The confusion arises from considering the personality "from below" — that is, from the standpoint of the "body" looking upwards. Considered "from above" the confusion is eliminated, because as already explained the upadhi for the monad (*Atma-Buddhi*) is Higher *Manas* (*Buddhi-Manas*). In turn, the upadhi for the Reincarnating *Ego* is the *Kama* principle: *Manas* links with *Kama*, as well as *Manas* links with *Buddhi* — hence the duality of the *Manas* principle. In turn Lower *Manas* with its upadhis (the three lowest principles) forms the personality during a lifetime on earth and is given a name (*Kamarupa*).

The questioner uses the simile of "a house divided against itself." This is indeed applicable when the lower aspects of the desire principle, *Kama*, take over and rule a person's life. But when the personality follows the behest of the Reincarnating *Ego* — that is, when the voice of conscience is listened to — it is no longer a case of the house being divided against itself.

Question. What is it that has the "Sovereign Will" which can open the door and let the immortal essence come out of its prison and make the man temporarily omniscient?

Answer. Again the Personality. The "Sovereign Will" can indeed open the door and let the immortal essence illumine the personality. Here is a strange paradox: on the one hand the personality can close the door, or on the other hand open the door by means of *Kama* — the higher aspect of the desire principle. This higher aspect was referred to in *The Secret Doctrine*, where *Kama* was linked with the activities of *Fohat*.

"*Kama* is the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from

the ABSOLUTE." (*The Theosophical Glossary*, pp. 170-1)

Question. What are the Skandhas?

Answer. Skandha is a term used in Buddhism, representing the elements of existence which form a being; specifically, the elements which compose the personality of a human being.

"It is the group of Skandhas, that form and constitute the physical and mental individuality we call man (or any being)." (M.L., p. 111)

'The 'old being' is the sole parent — father and mother at once — of the 'new being.' It is the former who is the creator and fashioner, of the latter, in reality; and far more so in plain truth, than any father in flesh." (M.L., p. 111)

As to the meaning of the word Skandha. It is a Sanskrit word (Khandha in Pali) derived from the verbal root *skand*, meaning to rise, conveying the idea that when a human being is born the skandhas arise to form a new personality. However, the word is usually rendered "groups of attributes." Another term often used is "thought-deposits," expressing the manner in which the skandhas are formed — by means of one's thoughts as well as deeds.

In Buddhism, in the exoteric teaching, five Skandhas are enumerated, representing groups of attributes in each category: (1) Rupa: form, shape, figure; the form attributes — that which has to do with the material attributes composing the form. (2) Vedana: sensations. (3) Sanjna (Sanna in Pali): abstract ideas. (4) Samskara (Sankhara in Pali): tendencies, both physical and mental. (5) Vijnana (Vinnana in Pali): mental powers, meaning the mental, physical and moral predispositions.

In *The Secret Doctrine*, Skandhas are defined as "the germs of life on all the seven planes of Being, and make up the totality of the subjective and objective man. Every vibration we have made is a Skandha The exoteric Skandhas have to do with the physical atoms and vibrations, or objective man; the Esoteric

with the internal and subjective man." (Vol. V, p. 560)

Question. Please explain the difference between one's Life or Manvantaric Star and one's astrological star.

Answer. This has reference to a passage in *The Secret Doctrine* where H.P.B. explains that every human being "is born under a star" which will be equivalent to its parent for the Manvantara. This has reference to the divine aspect in the human constitution, whereas the astrological star has reference to the personality. Here is the passage:

"The star under which a human Entity is born, says the Occult teaching, will remain for ever its star, throughout the whole cycle of its incarnations in one Manvantara. But *this is not his astrological star.* The latter is concerned and connected with the *personality*, the former with the *individuality*. The 'Angel' of that Star, or the Dhyani-Buddha will be either the guiding or simply the presiding 'Angel,' so to say, in every new rebirth of the monad, *which is part of his own essence*, though his vehicle, man, may remain for ever ignorant of this fact." (S.D. I, 572-3; II, 296 6 vol. ed.; I, 626 3rd ed.)

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.

Idyll of the White Lotus

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