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## THE NEW YEAR

H. P. BLAVATSKY

Instead of wishing our readers a happy or prosperous New Year, we feel more in the vein to pray them to make it a worthy one. This can be effected by those who are courageous and resolute. Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyze them by indifference, or actively drag them down. And no one can be quite inactive. Everyone lives, and thinks, and speaks. If all endeavoured to learn the art of making life not only beautiful but divine, and vowed no longer to be hampered by disbelief in the possibility of this miracle, but to commence the Herculean task at once, then the New Year would be fitly ushered in.

Neither happiness nor prosperity are always the best of bed-fellows for such undeveloped mortals as most of us are; they seldom bring with them peace, which is the only permanent joy. The idea of

peace is usually connected with the close of life and a religious state of mind. The peace of the philosophic mind is very different from this and can be attained early in life when pleasure has scarcely been tasted, as well as when it has been fully drunk of. The American Transcendentalists discovered that life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity. But every man has to discover this fact freshly for himself. The stoic became sublime because he recognized his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it; the Transcendentalist was even more, because he had faith in the unknown and untried possibilities which lay within himself. The occultist fully recognizes the responsibility and claims his title by having tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities. The Theosophist who is at all in earnest, sees his responsibility and endeavours to find knowledge, living, in the meantime, up to the highest standard of which he is aware. To all such, greeting! Man's life is in his own hands, his fate is ordered by himself. Why then should not the New Year be a year of greater spiritual development than any we have lived through? It depends on ourselves to make it so.

— *Lucifer*, Vol. 1, No. 5  
Jan. 1888

# BEATING THE ODDS

L. GORDON PLUMMER

A very interesting display to be found in the mathematics departments of many scientific museums is the Normal Distribution Board.

In order to avoid a tedious description of the device, it might help the reader if he will take a sheet of typewriting paper and draw a curve resembling a mountain with a rounded top. Start the curve one inch above the lower lefthand corner of the paper, and let the top of the mountain reach halfway up the paper, and continue the curve downward to an inch above the lower righthand corner of the paper. Call this the *normal curve*. Now take a foot rule, and draw vertical lines one inch apart, from the bottom of the page, and terminating where these lines touch the curve. These will represent seven columns of varying heights, the tallest being in the center of the page. Now write the following numbers across the bottom of the page, one number for each column: 1, 6, 15, 20, 15, 6 and 1. The importance of these numbers will shortly be explained.\*

Now draw a shallow funnel across the top of the page, the opening of the funnel being centered upon the paper. Between the funnel and the normal curve, draw about three dozen dots, which will represent metal pegs set into the back of the Galton Board. (Actually the pegs are set in a honeycomb pattern).

In operation, a large number of very small marbles are dropped into the funnel, and these will fall through the opening. They strike the metal pegs, and bounce about in a random manner. This ran-

domness is intentional, as it is used to illustrate a fundamental process in nature. The numbers at the bottom of the columns indicate the chances of any individual marble falling into the several columns. Thus, there are 20 possible pathways by which a marble can fall into the center column, 15 possible pathways by which it can fall into the columns on either side of the center column, 6 possible pathways by which it could fall into the next columns, and only one way by which it could possibly fall into either of the outside columns.

After leaving the funnel, no human hand touches the marbles in their random pathways to the columns. Now it would seem natural that an overwhelming proportion of them would take the easiest route and fall into the center column, and that none of them would make it to the outside columns. However, there is an inflexible law which causes the marbles to fall in such a manner that all of the columns are filled to the point where they touch the normal curve. So far as I know, this phenomenon has never been satisfactorily explained. Nevertheless, they always fall into the same pattern. There is nothing in nature that says that any or all of them are to reach a certain column, only, they don't! They always conform to this certain curve.

The Galton Board might at first appear to be a mere toy, but far from it. This normal curve is used in many ways in studying various phenomena in nature, ranging from actuarial tables used by life insurance companies to the likelihood of blue or brown eyes occurring in a crowd of people. The most important application of this phenomenon that we shall be concerned with is the principle that we can predict with certainty the behavior of a large number of units taken as a group, whereas the behavior of any one unit in the crowd is quite unpredictable. (This is known in scientific parlance as the Principle of Uncertainty).

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\*People who like algebra will note that these numbers are the base numbers of Pascal's triangle carried to the sixth power. These give us the coefficients of  $a$  and  $b$  when we expand  $(a + b)^6$ .  $(a + b)^6 = a^6 + 6a^5b + 15a^4b^2 + 20a^3b^3 + 15a^2b^4 + 6ab^5 + b^6$ .

This law is most widely studied in chemistry and nuclear physics, as in the behavior of gases and liquids, or on the other hand the behavior of a cloud of electrons. Whereas in such cases, the action of the group as a whole is predictable, the behavior of any molecule, atom, or electron as a unit is quite unpredictable. It is the randomness in nature that names the normal curve a certainty; a strange paradox.

Now, it seems that if we apply this principle to some of our theosophical doctrines, we might clear up some of our most perplexing problems. To cite one: how long does an individual spend in his Devachanic rest between earth lives? At least two answers have been given to wit: (1) Fifteen hundred years is the average, and (2) the time spent is roughly one hundred times the life-span of the individual who has passed on. The first figure was arrived at many years ago, when the average life-span for the human race was considered to be fifteen years. This figure was arrived at by taking into account the enormous number of infant mortalities in certain parts of the world, and for many of us, it does not seem to be a realistic figure, especially as with modern medical techniques the average life-span has been considerably lengthened. So when we are asked: how long does an individual stay in Devachan, we can only say that it depends upon the individual himself, and it will depend not only upon the length of time he has lived on Earth, but also on other factors, such as the dominant traits of his character. So, no ready answer can be given about any one individual, because, taken as a unit he is unpredictable. Nevertheless, the human race taken as a *group of entities* will follow its own normal curve, and if we could understand what this curve is, we would find that it takes into account all individual differences.

It is entirely conceivable that the trend toward over-population indicates that the human race is at present nearing the peak of its own normal curve, and that eventually the trend will be toward a smaller

Earth-population. Even so, the number of children that may be born in any individual family might be unpredictable, because the same principle applies.

Our understanding of the Rounds and Races might become a little clearer if we apply this same principle. The teachings as we have them might well represent the normal curve, but how can you fit any one individual into his own relation to the Rounds and Races? Some are carry-overs from previous Races, while others are far advanced, evolutionarily speaking, and have placed themselves in the vanguard. In fact, we learn that the Mahatmas are considered to be "Fifth Rounders", which means that they have already developed the consciousness that the entire human race will have achieved during the Fifth Round. But taking the human race as a whole, accounting for the exceptions as well as the masses, we find that they fit into that part of the normal curve which we call the Fourth Sub-race of the Fifth Root-Race on this Fourth Round. Since the Adepts have a far greater understanding than we have, they have been able to give us precise teachings — so far as we have been able to understand them — of the grand processes of Nature, one aspect of which we study under the general heading of Rounds and Races. Being only a portion of a vastly larger picture, it is probable, in fact we can say with certainty, that we have been given only a very small portion of the Esoteric Philosophy. A larger measure of knowledge will come as our ability to understand increases. The secret of it all is growth.

Bringing all of this a little closer to home, we have the very perplexing question of Karma. Its action is inadequately understood by us, so we wonder why an apparently good man suffers, while a scoundrel may go through life unscathed. We see seeming injustice on all sides, and so we worry and fret over these things, asking questions that we would not need to ask if we could only understand better the true nature of Karma. G. de Purucker taught that while there is indeed unmerited

suffering, there is no such thing as unmerited Karma. Not an easy problem for us to solve. However, it just might help us if we remember that even in human life there is randomness of action, and the life of no individual is entirely predictable. But let us think of the normal curve as the action of Karma, and the paradox begins to take on some meaning. Even the apparent randomness of some aspects of human life never places anyone outside the action of Karmic Law.

Taking now the global viewpoint we may come to see that human nature, being what it is, the odds against establishing a permanent peace based upon the principle of universal brotherhood are fearfully against

us. But there is no law of Nature saying that it cannot happen. There is no law of Nature that will prevent any human being, or a group of them, from rising above the present human madness; but the difficulties in the way of the earnest student are enormous. However they can be overcome, and fortunately, no one need be a victim of the randomness of nature. Because man has the possibility of developing his spiritual will, he can and should hasten his own growth and take his place among those who have dedicated themselves to the spiritual awakening of the human race. It is only by our own efforts that we can beat the odds.

## PLATO—AN ESOTERICIST?

J. H. DUBBINK, PH.D.

The following words are meant for serious students of H.P.B. who rejoice when modern currents in scientific thought tend to stress views which she in her time defended, and which were opposed or ridiculed by her contemporaries. A second class of readers will also be interested: those who lecture on Theosophia — they also will have (I hope) some more arguments to present.

H.P.B. looked upon Plato as a Fifth-Rounder, that is to say, Plato had, according to her, passed through "initiations" that had brought him right into the Hall of Wisdom and beyond (to use the expression of *The Voice of the Silence*). In other words, Plato had access to knowledge and wisdom for which the ordinary language of his time did not have words to express. That language, like ours, is used in the Hall of Ignorance, the world of the Fifth Race to which we belong. His work and duty as philosopher and initiate was to try to awaken the interest of his pupils and readers precisely for those aspects of his philosophy which were for

him the most dear, and also the most difficult to express. (See *Isis Unveiled*, I 287-8.) Though Plato and his direct disciples often mentioned those "unwritten" and even "not wholly verbalized" aspects of his philosophy, these words were neglected or interpreted in such a way that all "mystery mongers" who tried to annex Plato were ridiculed.

In her early work, *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. drew on the assistance of Prof. A. Wilder. There, and in her later books she repeatedly quoted the famous Plato-translator, Thomas Taylor. These were apparently the only students of Plato who were more or less esoterically minded.

Especially in Anglo Saxon countries was that "esoteric" line of interpretation shunned. After the second world war he was described by Prof. Popper, of London, as a (politically speaking) "authoritarian type". In this respect Popper was right, and this "right" can be seen clearly in the light of the more esoteric aspects of Plato. The distance between Plato's contemporary forms of democracy and the

ideals he studied through his initiations was very great. He came to the conclusion that the average Greek of the third century B.C. was incapable of carrying the burden of responsibility in political thought and life. Man in the Hall of Avidya (to quote again *The Voice of the Silence*) accordingly had to be led by wiser leaders—the question where to find those philosopher-kings remained, of course, unsolved.

In 1963 appeared in Germany the book *Platons Ungeschriebene Lehre*, by Konrad Gaiser, first as “Habilitationsschrift” at Tübingen University. “Ungeschriebene” means “unwritten”; “Lehre” is philosophy or teaching. The book consists of three

parts: pp. 1-331 contain the results of the studies; pp. 333-439, the “Anmerkungen” — the remarks — containing the author’s discussions with his colleagues and predecessors; the third part, pp. 441-557, contains a collection of the testimonies of ancient authors which bear on the topic of an “unwritten philosophy” of Plato.

From this very specialized work one thing is clear: it is possible to understand Plato in another way than did 19th and early 20th century scholars. Mr. Gaiser presented a diagram to illustrate to the reader the different elements of Plato’s thought and work.

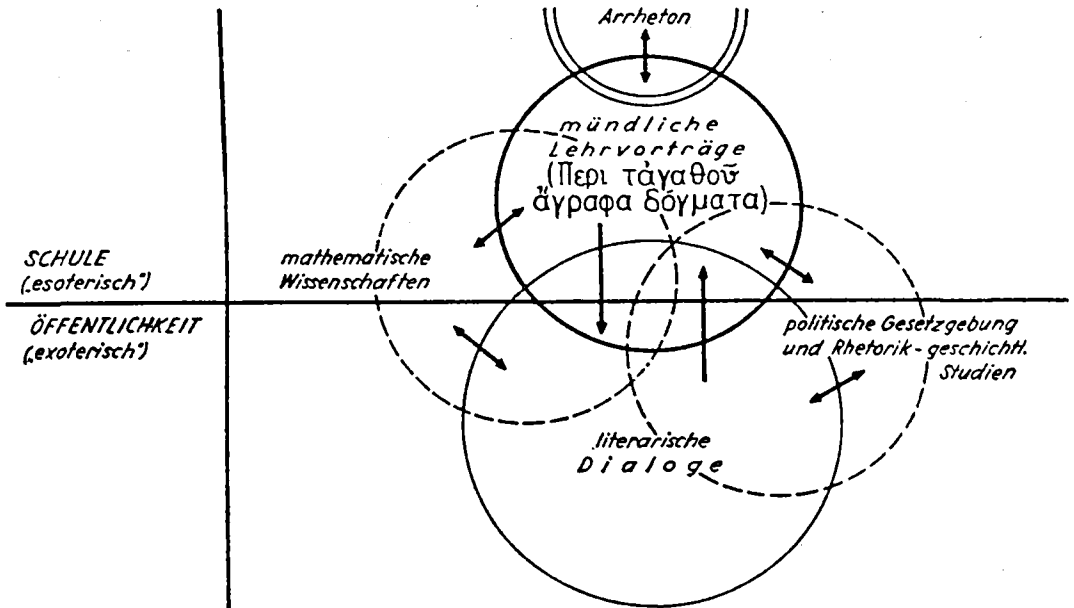


Fig. 1

Fig. 1, taken from Gaiser’s book, gives in a nutshell the contents and the limitations of the book. This will be clear with the translation of the German words together

with information on the way the diagram is linked with the rest of the book.

At the top the reader sees a transcription of a Greek word meaning “not-to-be-expressed-in-words”. From Gaiser’s drawing it is clear he thinks that this element only bears on the “oral tradition” — this is a translation of “mundliche Verträge”. The Greek words printed in that circle mean “On the Good”, the second line, “unwritten opinions”. How does

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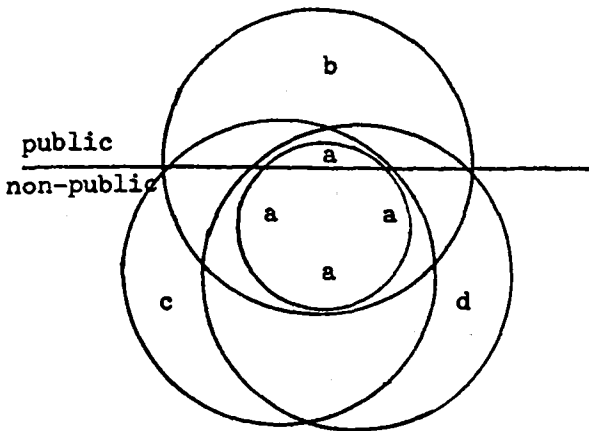
Gaiser know, or how can he suppose to have any knowledge of, thoughts not written down by Plato? Here I refer the reader to the "remarks" in Gaiser's book. The left circle is inscribed "mathematical sciences". On this topic Gaiser writes on pp. 41-201. Plato turns out to be one of the leading figures in the formation of mathematics in a form they were generally taught until the twentieth century in all middle schools.

The right circle is inscribed "political laws, eloquency and historical studies". It is this part of Plato's work that is attacked by Popper. This part is outside the scope of this article and is treated by Gaiser on pp. 205-289. One of Plato's characteristics is his deep pessimism regarding human affairs. From his words about Atlantis it is clear that he draws a parallel between Atlantis

and his contemporary Persia as champions of despotism and slavery, and the ideal Athens and his contemporary town as champions of anarchy.

Gaiser says that in his work there is no room for the dynamics which inspired Plato in his work, and which would account for the "evolution" or the "decadence" (as Plato interprets the history he knew—and did he have more knowledge of the Kali Yuga than H.P.B.?) As these points are of more interest than the scientific researches of Gaiser I am going to speculate on these topics, inspired by his book. Let us turn to the second diagram.

A student of H.P.B. would perhaps make some changes and insert more information than Mr. Gaiser has in his model. Tentatively I have made the following sketch.



**a: adept consciousness**  
**b: published dialogues**  
**c: mathematical discussions**  
**d: political activities**

**a → b : myths**  
**a → c : idea-numbers**  
**a → d : aristocratism**

Fig. 2

In the first place, it will be clear that the use of the word "esoteric" by Gaiser is somewhat wider than that in our literature. Gaiser means by "esoteric" those things and words remaining inside the walls of Plato's Academy. I would restrict the use of this word to the innermost circle—the reader will see, I think, that the "esoteric" element is not far away from the public part of Plato's activities. This is clear when attention is turned to the myths in different Dialogues. For example, in the Dialogue *Phaedrus*, Plato speaks at some length about the human souls and the gods, and

how the souls belong to the choirs of those gods, every soul trying to live up to the example of the god by doing his own work. This is very near to the "groups" or "hierarchies" of H.P.B. So, in my model, the real esoteric element, which lacking a better term I have called "Adept Consciousness", is present in all aspects of Plato's works, not only the Dialogues. Here I refer only to the political aspects. Plato's pessimism is quite understandable when knowing that he lived in the first 5,000 years of the Kali Yuga — some real changes, or perhaps possibilities for such changes,

occurring only after the 19th century A.D. But this implies that he wanted to give such information about the state of affairs in that Yuga as he could, or, in other words, to verbalize something from his consciousness or the source of information with which he was in contact.

The same thing can be said about the "mathematics" Plato discussed with his friends. His point of view differs somewhat from our modern one. We can observe that a technology devoted to the creation of nuclear arms can be developed on a base of scientific and mathematical thought, but by mental activity a hundred per cent detached from ethical considerations. We wanted to have "objective" science—which turned out to be a weapon against our own human interests. For Plato—was it on the basis of his initiations? who shall tell?—mathematics and ethics formed an indissoluble unity. "One" was at the same time a mathematical concept and a synonym of the "Good"—a god, and more than a god? "One" was the expression of a mathematical concept for the "Idea", the source of being, and for the "Ideal" towards which the selfconscious human mind is striving. Especially before the first world war these ideas of Plato were looked upon as antiquated: science had long outgrown this mythical level of philosophy. But now the pendulum is swinging in the other direction: we are looking for a new synthesis of the basic thought of science and a truly human behaviour on all levels, in biology as well as in sociology. Though we cannot accept the ways in which Plato identified mathematics and ethics, there is or there should be a new way of interpreting our abstract thought in terms of human interests—though the way how is not at all clear. In other words we have not made the symbolism of numbers "operational" so as to bear on our personal, concrete, everyday behaviour—it is only through the medium of technology that the influence of mathematical thought is felt.

But as both the aspects of "mathematics" as that of "politics" by

Plato, in so far as they are not explicated in the Dialogues, are rather a matter for study by specialists in Greek and in Theosophy as taught by H.P.B., we had better pass to some hints for the general student who has easy access to the English translations of Plato.

I wish to refer here to the "myth" in the Dialogue *Phaedrus*, which I happen to have read this year at my Gymnasium with a group of pupils. One has the impression that in those "myths"—which are not old, ancient, archaic ways of thinking, but Plato's own artistic inventions to express his thoughts in as far as he thought good to do so—we have the possibility of sensing the "teachings" Plato had found in the course of his career as an initiate. The *Phaedrus* myth has some resemblance to the Stanzas quoted by H.P.B.—not as to the contents, but more as to the technique.

It will be generally known that these Stanzas are a sort of a model explaining the "history" of our earth. In that case, the reader ought to study them as referring to facts, mainstreams of organized life thousands and thousands of years ago. But at the same time we find clearly expressed that the "history" is not a remote past, but present in some aspects of reality to which we have no access. This enigma is hinted at in the Preliminary Notes in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. Here we find postulated "...the simultaneous evolution of seven human groups on seven different portions of our globe;" and "...the birth of the *astral*, before the *physical* body..." the latter implying the element of "time" as we know it, the former denying it.

Now the way H.P.B. interprets the "myth" and the wording of Plato show an analogous enigmatical difference. In the myth Plato speaks about human "souls" as chariots with winged horses; this is interpreted by H.P.B. as "winged Races". That is to say, she explains the words as an allusion to the more ethereal races of mankind which were destroyed like the Kings of Edom hinted at in the S.D., e.g., II, 704-707. And this is a historical fact, be it

history the testimonies of which are not yet available for an inquisitive mind. . . Now, if, after reading the myth one tries to make clear at which point in the narrative we are at in the year 1972, one does not succeed, just as the critical pupil of Plato, Aristotle, did not succeed. But according to H.P.B., for the reader who avails himself of the "keys" she laid before us, the same symbolism ("winged horses and a

chariot") can be interpreted as "historical fact" and as "extra-temporeous" life.

I hope these concluding words make it clear why I put the "esoteric" aspects in the centre of Plato's works, and not somewhere up in the air, as Mr. Gaiser seems to do.

*This article has been translated from the Dutch. It appeared originally in Theosofia, May, 1972*

## THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

FRANK P. BOUCHER

At the stage of man's development when matters of a serious nature begin to occupy his mind, the three principal questions uppermost in his thoughts are—From whence did I come? Why am I here? and Whither am I going?

But this stage does not concern us seriously until we have passed the age of adolescence; nevertheless our early childhood does hold problems which appear rather serious to us.

I suppose our earliest recollection of life was the lesson of obedience; then as soon as we were able to think and speak a little we were taught the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. These had to be learnt by heart. We understood very little about them at that time and they were repeated "parrot fashion".

We were baptised or christened, and were then told we were "Children of God and Inheritors of Heaven." Heaven was up above the sky among the stars. It did not mean much to us at that time and we took it all as a matter of course.

As we got older we were no doubt sent to Sunday School (I know I was), and perhaps a little later became Sunday School teachers. This entailed certain responsibilities — lessons to prepare, questions to answer, and some of these at times could be rather embarrassing.

If there was any question to which I was

not sure of the answer, I put my pupils off by telling them they must have faith. That was the answer my teacher gave me when I was their age.

At home, we were brought up to believe in the Bible implicitly, but I am afraid even in those days I was a rebel for I absolutely refused to believe the world was made in six days.

In my early teens my reading became a little more serious. I started to read a book of Darwin's, but this was taboo because I was told he taught we were descended from monkeys. I found Marie Corelli's *Romance of Two Worlds* fascinating, but her books were barred for I was told she was a very wicked woman. This meant I had to do my serious reading on the quiet.

One book told me that an old philosopher, by the name of Paracelsus, taught that man possessed two bodies and a soul, the visible body coming from the earth, the invisible body coming from the stars, and the soul coming from God.

I also read of another great philosopher, Spinoza, who taught, "Everything in the Universe IS God, and all the individual things are actually one great whole."

Here was a definite clue to the problem "From whence I came."

After leaving school and entering into the whirl of everyday life, I found much of my religious teaching impracticable in most



business transactions. I had been trained to tell the truth, that to lie was wrong and deserved punishment, yet truth and business invariably clashed. I found the teachings of that wonderful story "The Sermon on the Mount" woefully ignored in practice and often laughed at.

Even the churches themselves appeared to me to place more emphasis on dogma and materialism than upon the teachings of Jesus.

I felt frustrated, often depressed, and very discouraged.

While in this mood one day I had a very strange experience. It seemed strange to me at that time; now I can quite understand it.

I was walking along a river bank one winter evening. The weather was clear and frosty. On the opposite bank of the river was a naval dockyard lit up with a blaze of light: I paused; the clang of machinery could be plainly heard. The thought came to my mind, "Weapons of destruction, war. Why should it be?"

At that moment the hammering ceased.

In the distance, over the clear frosty air could be heard the bells from the little country church. "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men" seemed to be the message.

I looked upwards and there saw myriads of stars shining in all their glory. The question came to me—why? Peace on one side. Destruction on the other. The starry heavens looking down on both.

Me. A small speck of humanity who would never be missed. What could I do about it?

I think at that moment I realised there must be a reason WHY I am here and I determined to do my best to find out.

With my upbringing I think it was only natural I should turn to the different religions to try to find my bearings.

I had been well grounded in Christianity, so I learned what I could about Buddhism and Mohammedanism, but they did not altogether prove satisfactory.

I found out one thing, however; that the basis of all these beliefs, when stripped of all dogma, was the teaching of

"Brotherhood", that God and Man are One; the old, old teaching of the Ancient Wisdom, Theosophy, as we call it.

Science today, in all its branches, has made such rapid progress that it has discredited much of the present day religious beliefs.

Astronomy has completely revised the Christian idea of Heaven.

Geology has displaced all myths of the Creation.

Biology has altered all our old ideas of the soul and mind, and in so doing has placed a new meaning on the ideas of sin, redemption, and immortality.

Anthropology has given us a new conception of Christian origin; and Psychology tends to explain away all that once seemed to be supernatural.

BUT, do not let us forget for one moment that in spite of all our doubtings, and whether we like to believe it or not, we DO live in a religious world. . . Think this over seriously.

A wise old country doctor summed it up in this way: I believe that no man can realise his destiny unless he clings to some form of religion, whether it is the formal observance of Sunday church-going duties, or in the simple vision of service as exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

This parable, as you know, exemplifies that second great command given by the Master, Jesus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," a lesson on Brotherhood.

We read of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Mechanical Age. At the present time the world is living in what I call the 4-F Age: Fear, Friction, Folly, and Frustration.

Of these four I think Fear is the worst, and the most deadly; it seems to permeate everything and everybody—the mad rush for power for fear we shall be trodden underfoot; fear of destruction or annihilation through another war; fear of famine and disease in many countries.

Friction is another strain the world is under today . . . THE CLASH OF WILLS. I am sorry to say this is very noticeable

among the younger generation, but I do not think they are altogether to blame, neither is the fault entirely the parents.

Conditions under which we live today—with over crowding and everyone living on top of each other, the tendency is to get on each other's nerves. Presently something gives way, and the younger ones, like the ship's cat, being the last in line, get the blame. Naturally they resent it: can you blame them?

This friction can also be seen on a national scale. . . one nation striving to gain control over another. . . the forming of cartels and the erection of tariff barriers to control the flow of trade — all have a tendency to promote discord and therefore defeat the cause of universal Brotherhood.

Then we come to the third "F" — Folly.

When we look around at the mad scramble today, especially in our big cities, we see everyone rushing somewhere as if their life depended on getting there in the quickest possible time. You know the idea — sign on the dotted line now, tomorrow may be too late.

It reminds me of the following lines:  
Boys flying kites haul in their white winged birds,  
You can't do that when you are flying words.

Careful with fire is good advice, we know,

Careful with words is ten times doubly so.

Thoughts unexpressed may oft times fall back dead,

But God himself can't kill them once they're said.

You know, all that we are is the result of what we have thought. Thoughts are things. They are real entities.

The funny part about it is, we are always ready to blame everyone but ourselves for causing all this discomfort and misery. Very few of us have the courage to be ourselves, to admit our mistakes, and what is more, to realise we have the means within ourselves to overcome them.

Today we are finding that human beings

are swayed more by passion and prejudice than by motives.

Plato said: "The goal of the soul is to free itself from the body in order that it may see truth clearly." To Plato the soul was the seat of all knowledge. Ideas had to be implanted in the mind before becoming imbedded in the body.

If we as individuals are to be real human beings, we must be free to choose between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Truth is essential: it is eternal and unchanging, and we shall find there is only one certain path to take to find it — the road of diligent study and observation. Ignorance can only be overcome by experience. "Seek and ye shall find" was the message given by the great teacher. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Everywhere we find growth, change; nothing stands still. We see this very forcibly in Nature today: Winter is just over; Spring is here, to be followed by Summer and Autumn, then Winter again. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear: after that the harvest.

We see it in our own growth; younger souls below us, older souls above us, all travelling towards that higher goal, to that undiscovered country — that oneness with God.

Today man cannot live in isolation, and we cannot use the best of our moral or spiritual character unless we take our place among others.

Do you realise those three great virtues—faith, hope, and love—are essential for happiness, and that they imply human relationship?

Without faith in the existence of a Supreme Being (call that Being what you will): without faith in the belief of reincarnation, the trials and sufferings of this world would be unbearable. Our faith must be real: it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

When we read and hear of the chaos and turmoil the world is in today, don't we sometimes wonder if it is all worth while?

*(Continued on page 135)*

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death of Mrs. Winifred Tiplin on December 6 after a long illness. She had been in the Society for many years, the last thirty as a member of Edmonton Lodge. In earlier years Mrs. Tiplin's articles appeared frequently in this magazine.

Our sympathy is extended to her daughters and grand-children.

\* \* \*

Geoffrey Farthing's Canadian tour was a great success, as is evident from the reports in this issue of some of the Lodges he visited. We are grateful that he was able to be with us, and for being so generous with his time and talents on our behalf.

In the true pioneer spirit he even broke new ground for Theosophy. In the city of Red Deer, Alberta (about half way between Edmonton and Calgary) he participated in an open-line radio program and also gave a public lecture. To the best of my knowledge this was the first time ever that the general public in Red Deer had been exposed to Theosophical ideas. Credit is due not only to Mr. Farthing but also to the Edmonton Lodge members who made the necessary arrangements. It is to be hoped that their effort will bear fruit, perhaps in the form of a study centre; in any event, the example of our Albertan members shows what can be done by a few dedicated Theosophists who "try".

As well as his public lectures, Mr. Farthing spoke at members' meetings in several centres. As a consequence some groups intend to take up the course on meditation he developed while General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England.

\* \* \*

Even a broken hip has not dulled Dudley Barr's cheerful disposition. This unfortunate accident to our former General

Secretary occurred in October, and at the time of going to press it seemed likely he would have to remain on his back until early in the new year. I am pleased to report that, apart from his injury and the arthritis from which he has suffered for years, he is in good health and spirits. He continues to take a keen interest in Theosophical affairs.

\* \* \*

I was pleased to hear from Boris de Zirkoff that he is now reading proofs of Volume XI in the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* series. This series, together with his work on the new edition of *Isis Unveiled*, and his contribution to the book *William Quan Judge, Theosophical Pioneer*, represents a terrific effort on the part of Mr. de Zirkoff.

In addition, he continues to edit his own independent magazine, *Theosophia*, that most interesting quarterly. (For more information on *Theosophia*, readers are invited to write to 550 South Oxford Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90020, U.S.A.)

\* \* \*

With the *Collected Writings* supplementing her major works, nearly everything that H.P.B. wrote will be available in authentic form and convenient editions by the time of the Centenary in 1975. For this we should all be grateful. However, I must again point out that this is true only as far as the English language is concerned. For millions there is nothing by Blavatsky available in their native tongue.

Your support for the Non-English Publications Loan Fund will help overcome this situation. The Fund is already helping with the publishing of *An Abridgement of The Secret Doctrine* in Spanish. It is also hoped that several translations of *The Key to Theosophy* will be available before 1975. Donations, clearly marked for the Non-English Publications Loan Fund, should be sent to The Theosophical Society in America, P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois, 60187, U.S.A.

\* \* \*

Business took me to Montreal in late

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

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November, and I was happy that the occasion allowed me to attend a meeting of the Montreal Lodge. This was my first glimpse of the new quarters, and I was impressed with their superiority over the old. Library shelves take up a large proportion of the wall space and there is ample room for a discussion circle of chairs. On the evening I was there, a number of new enquirers took part and I was impressed with the level—and liveliness—of the discussion.

I am pleased to welcome the following new members into the fellowship of the Society:

*Montreal Lodge* Muriel M. Kerr, Jan R. Kowalski.

*Toronto Lodge* Sammie T. Cotton (by transfer from the American Section), Andrew W. Hargen.

*Member-at-Large* James R. C. Landry.

T.G.D.

## MONTREAL LODGE

The Lodge regrets to report the passing of one of its members of long-standing, Mr. Ronald Leavitt, and sympathy is extended to Mrs. Valerie Leavitt in the physical loss of her dear husband. We, who were privileged to meet and study with Mr. Leavitt recognized him as a rare student of the Ancient Wisdom. May he rest in his Devachan until it is time for return once more to the Work.

On October 31 the new Quest film "Reincarnation" was shown to the general public. A large number attended the showing and many questions were asked. It is hoped that some light was shed on this important subject.

The Lodge welcomes Muriel Kerr and Jan R. Kowalski to its membership and it is hoped that some of the enquirers who are attending regularly may also feel like joining us. The Tuesday Study class has had a good attendance and much interest is shown in the Introductory Information and Study Course papers which explain the teachings in a practical way. These papers are obtainable from The Theosophical Society in England and can be recommended to any Lodge.

In November we had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. Geoffrey Farthing. A public lecture was given on November 15 entitled "Karma—The Universal Law" and on November 16 Mr. Farthing met with the members for a talk and general discussion.

Greetings and good wishes to all Lodges from Montreal Lodge for 1973.

Viola P. Law  
Secretary

## ORPHEUS LODGE

A public lecture was given November 4 in Vancouver by Mr. Geoffrey Farthing under the joint auspices of the Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges. Mr. Farthing later attended two meetings of the combined lodges. His subject for the lecture was "Theosophy. What's It All About?"

Since most of his listeners were already students he presented his subject without much preamble and based it on The Three Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine. In that way he gave himself far greater scope than would have been possible with beginners and we were treated to a first class presentation from the metaphysical approach.

"Humanity is moving nowhere at the moment except in terms of material progress and it is beginning to get scared," said Mr. Farthing. He then discussed what Theosophy can do for us in this respect. Man is a free agent compared to the rest of nature. Only he can create his future. Therefore he must take the responsibility for his own life. Growth is not possible without effort.

But in terms of human development, rather than material progress, growth lies in the region above the lower Manas. The use man makes of his Mind principle will characterize his effort and determine its results. In order to motivate it in these more lofty regions he will need to develop the uniquely human attributes of discrimination, intelligence, love, will, compassion and courage. The evolutionary progress of the race depends upon individuals to establish these attributes in human life.

The speaker also stressed that though there are many Theosophists holding dissimilar points of view, there can be only one Theosophy. And one man's opinion is not necessarily Theosophy at all. The differences arise in interpretation and in our ability, or the lack of it, to grasp the Blavatsky teaching.

In the first joint meeting Mr. Farthing said that we must recreate Theosophy in

the public eye. Due to the fact that the original message was diluted in order to make it popular it is not now appealing to that higher level of Mind on which he dwelt in his lecture. You cannot make a Theosophist of one whose understanding of the teaching is in a sectarian or egotistic way; He illustrated the kind of effort required of the Theosophical student in order to be able to convey it to others by readings from *The Key To Theosophy* and again stressed that there is only one Theosophy.

In the second joint meeting a practice of the technique of group meditation, as outlined in his book on Meditation, was held. Mr. Farthing described this technique as having been put together from classical sources on meditation and is designed for beginners.

Lillian Hooper  
Recording Secretary

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## VANCOUVER LODGE

In early November Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges had the enjoyable stimulation of a visit from Mr. Geoffrey Farthing, who was until recently the General Secretary of the English Section. Mr. Farthing arrived on November 3 from California, where he had been visiting well known Theosophists and friends, for his first visit to Canada. He gave a public lecture at the Vancouver Hotel, spent two evenings with members at Vancouver and Orpheus Lodges, one of which was a joint gathering for Mr. Farthing to present his course on Meditation. He spent a couple of days in beautiful Victoria for an address at Victoria Lodge and a members' luncheon. Additionally he enjoyed some sight-seeing and entertainment and friendly discussions with various members of all Lodges.

Considerable interest has been shown in the Meditation Course, which will be the subject for discussion at a joint meeting of Vancouver and Orpheus Lodge on December 14. On Friday, November 24, a joint gathering of the two Lodges and Mrs. Buchanan's "Monday Class" viewed the

new movie on "Reincarnation". Members of these three groups get together every two months to discuss general Theosophical subjects.

Doreen Chatwin  
President

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### EDMONTON LODGE

Geoffrey Farthing, former General Secretary of the T.S. in England, was guest of Edmonton Lodge November 10-14. He was met in Calgary on November 9 following a successful meeting put on in that city by Calgary Lodge, and driven to Red Deer. There, on the morning of the 10th he was on the air for an hour on an "open-line".

That same (Friday) evening a public meeting was held in Edmonton. Mr. Farthing spoke on "Fundamentals of Theosophy". Saturday and Sunday were free of engagements, leaving time for some informal chats and sightseeing. On Monday evening the Lodge sponsored a public lecture in Red Deer on "The Purpose of Living".

In all three cities attendances were good and a considerable number of books were sold.

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### HAMILTON LODGE

On November 20 the Lodge had the privilege of a visit from Mr. Geoffrey Farthing of London, England. Mr. Farthing, author, lecturer and former General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England, delivered a public lecture entitled "Life, Death & Dreams". The audience, composed of members, adherents and friends received the lecture with enthusiasm and many asked questions of Mr. Farthing, who was most generous with his time.

Refreshments were served and a social hour was spent giving many who remained an opportunity to meet and chat informally with Mr. Farthing.

Muriel Mitchell  
Secretary

### VICTORIA LODGE

The Lodge enjoyed a visit from Mr. Geoffrey Farthing in the early part of November. On November 6 Mr. Farthing delivered a public lecture, his title being "A New Look at Evolution". A number of thought-provoking questions were asked after the talk, indicative of the interest of those present.

On November 7 Mr. Farthing met the members for lunch at the Oak Bay Beach Hotel and this gave an opportunity afterwards for an informal talk and general discussion.

It was a pleasure to show Mr. Farthing around our beautiful city and he expressed the wish that he would some day be able to return for another visit.

Sybil Bateman  
Secretary

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### TORONTO LODGE

Toronto Lodge welcomed Geoffrey Farthing on November 19 when Mr. Farthing gave a public lecture on "The Psychic Nature of Man". The large auditorium at 12 MacPherson Avenue was well filled for the occasion.

Following the lecture, and after enjoying a cup of coffee, the meeting continued in the Blavatsky Room where Mr. Farthing answered many interesting questions on the subject of his talk. Questions were still forthcoming when the Chairman, in view of the lateness of the hour, reluctantly brought the meeting to a close.

After visiting Hamilton, Mr. Farthing returned to Toronto Lodge on November 21 for another public lecture entitled "Theosophy—What's It All About". This talk was also well received and was again followed by an informal question and answer period.

Much planning and hard work was involved in the Bazaar held at 12 MacPherson Avenue on November 24 and 25. It was the first such venture since the Lodge left its old quarters at 52 Isabella Street.

Members of long standing and those newly joined, gave freely of their time and energy in sorting, pricing, decorating, contributing their handiwork, baking, manning booths, serving lunches and carrying out tasks both large and small necessary to the success of such an undertaking.

Over and above its financial success the Bazaar generated excellent publicity and a large number of Torontonians learned about the Society for the first time through mentions by popular newspaper columnists &c. Several who attended, expressed an interest in the Society and asked for information regarding lectures and books.

In spite of all the work involved, it is hoped to have another Bazaar this year.

The Secret Doctrine Class meets every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. There is an Occult Studies Class on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. and a class on Mental Alchemy on Fridays at 8 p.m. The Library is open on Wednesdays from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and on Sundays from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The Lodge operates a Travelling Library and enquiries as to book list and loan of books should be made to The Travelling Librarian, Toronto Theosophical Society, 12 MacPherson Avenue, Toronto 185, Ont.

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## THE KROTONA SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY

The Krotona Institute School of Theosophy has announced its program for the Winter Term, 1973. The Courses include Oriental Philosophy, First Fundamentals of Theosophy, Mind in Action, Education for Perfection: The Path. Methods of Occult Research, Archaeological Parallelisms in Orthodox and Esoteric Science, Secret Doctrine Studies, Comparative Study of the Living Religions of the World, Life Styles and Human Survival, Creative Thinking.

The distinguished faculty includes Francisco T. Escudero and Benito F. Reyes, co-directors, Nathaniel Altman, Framroze A. Bode and Michel d'Obrenovic.

For information regarding the Spring

term, write Robert J. Schick, Staff Assistant, The Krotona School of Theosophy, Route 2, Krotona 46, Ojai, California 93023, U.S.A.

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## YOUNG THEOSOPHISTS' ACTIVITIES

A week-long seminar for Young Theosophists is planned for the Spring. It will be held at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society in America, "Olcott", Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. A special accommodation rate of \$35.00 for room (shared) and board is offered for five nights and days.

For further information, write Brian Ziegler, Secretary, American Federation of Young Theosophists, 215 North Spring Street, Elgin, Illinois, 60120, U.S.A.

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## THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

*(Continued from page 130)*

Many are wondering if life is worth living. Want of hope is their greatest danger, but we must never give up, for nothing great or enduring can ever be achieved without hope.

The early Christians taught Faith, Hope, and Charity. By Charity they meant "Christian love of their fellow man." Today the meaning has been abused and more often than not means someone living on the gift of others. Now we use the word "love", and I am sorry to say that word seems to be getting equally abused and has rather what I call a "sticky" meaning. A pity — for Love is the very foundation of the teachings, and it is also one of the Master's great commands: "That ye love one another. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Love is the counterpart of tolerance; for Love is positive, tolerance is negative.

We cannot help wondering what good purpose can be accomplished by the terrible conditions in the world today, with enormous loss of lives, both human and animal, and suffering which will last for a

long time. We all feel deep sorrow and are quick to express it both by thought and deed, but to many that does not supply a satisfactory answer. In studying world history, at different periods throughout the ages mankind has grown very callous and materialistic; and it has taken a severe shock such as an earthquake, a flood, or even a war to bring man back to his senses, to show the spirit of compassion is not dead, and to make us realise we are our brother's keeper. By many these catastrophes are taken as a matter of course, but we know there is a reason and that reason is just.

It is the old, old law of Karma, "As ye sow so shall ye reap," the Law of Cause and Effect. The Cause can be traced back to ages ago, but the Effect may not be apparent for years to come and will depend entirely on how we live this life.

Today we are living in a wonderful age. We talk of the good old times, but would we really like to go back to them? I think not. I know I wouldn't.

But I think we are entitled to a slight pat

on the back, for all of us here must admit that we are better men and women today than we were, say, ten years ago. . . better in character, understanding, and more sympathetic. Do not forget for one moment that the more we develop these qualities, the more good Karma we are storing up for our next incarnation. The more we strive for knowledge at this physical level, the sooner we shall come to understand the Law and learn to work with it, and rise above that materialistic plane that the world seems to be heading for today.

I say "seems to be heading for" because I believe if we will take the trouble to read and analyze carefully the writings, and listen to the talks (not the condensed versions) of prominent men and women of today, we shall find there is a tendency to get away from that materialistic plane. . . that there IS something higher and nobler the world IS striving for.

I call it — a new form of Idealism!!

(To be continued)

## 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.* Does *The Secret Doctrine* mention which way the arms of the Svastika should be drawn, and what is its meaning?

*Answer.* Although the Svastika is mentioned a good many times and is also reproduced on many of its pages, there does not seem to be any mention regarding the way the arms should be drawn. Since one of the meanings of the svastika represents spirit and matter, this would represent the involution of spirit and the evolution of matter (when the arms are drawn one way), consequently when the arms are drawn in the opposite direction

this would indicate the involution of matter and the evolution of spirit. In this connection then the svastika represents the Descending and Ascending Arcs of Evolution. Here is a quotation which refers to the svastika as the Hammer of Creation:

"In the *Macrocosmic work*, the 'Hammer of Creation,' with its four arms bent at right angles, refers to the continual *motion* and revolution of the invisible Kosmos of Forces. In that of the manifested Kosmos and our Earth, it points to the rotation in the cycles of Time of the world's axes and their equatorial belts; the two lines forming



the *Svastica* meaning Spirit and Matter, the four hooks suggesting the motion in the revolving cycles. Applied to the *Microcosm*, Man, it shows him to be a link between heaven and Earth: the right hand being raised at the end of a horizontal arm, the left pointing to the Earth. . . It is at one and the same time an Alchemical, Cosmogonical, anthropological, and Magical sign, with seven keys to its inner meaning. It is not too much to say that the compound symbolism of this universal and most suggestive of signs contains the key to the seven great mysteries of Kosmos." (S.D. II, 99; III, 108 6-vol. ed.; II, 104 3rd ed.)

In the Eddas the svastika is named *Mjolnir*, the storm-hammer of the thunder-god Thor, made for him by the dwarfs. The weapon is described as so potent that with it the god was able to conquer men and gods alike.

"The *Svastica* is found heading the religious symbols of every old nation. It is the 'Worker's Hammer' in the *Chaldean Book of Numbers*,. . . 'which striketh sparks from the flint' (Space), those sparks becoming worlds." (S.D. II, 99; III, 107 6-vol. ed.; II, 104 3rd ed.)

"There was a time, when the Eastern symbol of the Cross and Circle, the *Swastica*, was universally adopted. With the esoteric (and, for the matter of that, exoteric) Buddhist, the Chinaman and the Mongolian, it means 'the 10,000 truths.' These truths, they say, belong to the mysteries of the unseen Universe and primordial Cosmogony and Theogony. 'Since Fohat crossed the Circle like two lines of flame (horizontally and vertically) the hosts of the Blessed Ones have never failed to send their representatives upon the planets they are made to watch over from the beginning.' This is why the *Swastica* is always placed — as the ansated Cross was in Egypt — on the breasts of the defunct mystics. It is found on the heart of the images and

statues of Buddha, in Tibet and Mongolia. . .

"Few world-symbols are more pregnant with real occult meaning than the *Swastica*. It is symbolized by the figure 6; for, like that figure, it points in its concrete imagery, as the ideograph of the number does, to the Zenith and the Nadir, to North, South, West, and East; one finds the unit everywhere, and that unit reflected in all and every unit. It is the emblem of the activity of Fohat, of the continual revolution of the 'wheels,' and of the Four Elements, the 'Sacred Four,' in their mystical, and not alone in their cosmical meaning; further, its four arms, bent at right angles, are intimately related, as shown elsewhere, to the Pythagorean and Hermetic scales. One initiated into the mysteries of the meaning of the *Swastica*, say the Commentaries, 'can trace on it, with mathematical precision, the evolution of Kosmos and the whole period of *Sandhya*.' Also 'the relation of the Seen to the Unseen,' and 'the first procreation of man and species.' " (S.D. II, 586-7; IV, 157-9 6-vol. ed.; II, 619-21 3rd ed.)

*Question.* Since astronomers name nine planets in the solar system, when including the Earth, what is the significance of the seven Sacred Planets?

*Answer.* It must be borne in mind that when the ancients referred to the seven Sacred Planets it was not a question of naming how many planets were known to them. *The Secret Doctrine* stated the matter clearly enough:

"The seven planets are not limited to this number because the ancients knew of no others, but simply because they were the primitive or primordial *houses* of the seven *Logoi*. There may be nine and ninety-nine other planets discovered — this does not alter the fact of these seven alone being sacred." (S.D. II, 602; IV, 173 6-vol. ed.; II, 637 3rd ed.)

It is interesting to note that nine planets were here mentioned, although written in 1887, long before the discovery of Pluto — which was made in 1930.

The reason that the seven planets named by the ancients were regarded as being sacred was because the primordial houses (as represented by the planetary bodies) act in the nature of focalizations for the seven great Forces of the Universe, which are described as operative in bringing a cosmos into being. A Commentary from the Book of Dzyan expresses this concept more precisely:

“The Globe, propelled onward by the Spirit of the Earth and his six assistants, gets all its vital forces, life, and powers through the medium of the seven planetary Dhyanis from the Spirit of the Sun. They are his messengers of Light and Life.” (S.D. II, 28-9; III, 41 6-vol. ed.; II, 32 3rd ed.)

In this quotation the Globe represents our Earth (referred to as Globe D); the Spirit of the Earth signifies the Rector or Logos of the Earth system; the six assistants are the Dhyani-Bodhisattvas (who act as Regents of the Globes of the Earth-Chain). The Spirit of the Sun stands for the Solar Logos, and the seven Planetary Dhyanis are the Rectors or Regents of the seven Sacred Planets, who are referred to as Messengers of Light and Life — thus acting as the transmitters of the seven great Forces of the Universe. These seven Dhyanis are the Regents of the Seven Sacred Planets — named in this manner: the Sun (named as a substitute for an intra-Mercurial planet), Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Mercury, Mars and the planet for which the moon is named as a substitute.

*Question.* Why is it that Mars, the planet which is usually associated with Kama, the desire principle, is regarded as the Regent of Globe F — a Globe superior to that of Globe D?

*Answer.* Evidently the questioner is regarding only one aspect of the Kama principle, and is associating it with the “desire aspect” of Kama, which is predominantly operating in human beings in connection with the lower mind. But it should be borne in mind that each principle has seven aspects, so that there is a superior aspect of Kama (which is also the

energizing principle) as well as an inferior aspect. The superior aspect of Kama is very well expressed by H. P. Blavatsky:

“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. Says the *Rig Veda*, ‘Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity,’ or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi*. There is no idea of *sexual* love in the conception. Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphization its grandest ideals into cut and dried dogmas, that Kama became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.” (*Theosophical Glossary*, 170-1)

*Question.* When we read of the “ego,” we are not always sure what is meant. Will you please explain the difference between the higher and the lower ego.

*Answer.* The word *ego* comes from the Greek and Latin and means the personal pronoun of the “first person.” In Latin, when declined, *ego* becomes “me” (just as in English: of me, to me, by me; and the accusative of “I” is “me.”). The primary dictionary meaning of “ego” is given as the thinking, feeling, and acting self that is conscious of itself and aware of its distinction from the selves of others and from the objects of its thought and other operations. This is an excellent definition of what is termed the “personal ego” which may be equated to the questioner’s “lower ego.” In Theosophical terminology a distinction is made between this “lower ego” (so called) and the “higher ego.” The latter is made equivalent to the Rein-carnating Ego.

A knowledge of the Sanskrit terms is most useful in clarifying the concept of the "two egos." The lower ego is made equivalent to Kama-manas signifying that the desire principle (Kama) is predominant over the mind principle (Manas). In the definition of the higher ego, which is equivalent to Buddhi-manas, it means that the discriminating principle (Buddhi) is prevailing over the mind principle. The point to be remembered in connection with this description of the *functioning* aspect of these principles, is that the mind principle is regarded as dual in activity. In other words the higher ego is active when Manas functions by means of uniting with the discriminating principle — instead of functioning by itself alone; and when operating in conjunction with the desire principle it means that the lower ego is active. Buddhi-manas is defined as the Reincarnating Ego, or the higher ego.

Question. In *The Secret Doctrine* we read: "Svabhavat passes at every new rebirth of Kosmos, from an inactive state into one of intense activity; then begins its work through that differentiation. This work is Karma." Please explain the meaning of Svabhavat; and what is meant by "this work is Karma."

Answer. "Svabhavat" is a Sanskrit compound, formed of *sva*, "self," and *bhavat*, "that which is becoming" — it may be rendered "the state of self-becomingness" (to coin an expression). Philosophically expressed, it is the condition or state of cosmic substance before activity or separation (described as "differentiation" in the quotation) has commenced which results in manifestation. As expressed in *The Secret Doctrine*:

"Everything has come out of Akasa (or Svabhavat on our earth) in obedience to a law of motion inherent in it, and after a certain existence passes away." (S.D. I, 635-6; II, 360, 6 vol. ed.; I, 697 3rd ed.)

The sentence "This is Karma" was explained in a passage preceding the one that was quoted:

"The *one life* is closely related to the *one law* which governs the World of Being — Karma." (S.D. I, 634; II, 359 6-vol. ed.; I, 695 3rd ed.)

The paragraph which follows the passage quoted by the questioner reads:

"The Cycles are also subservient to the effects produced by this activity. 'The one Cosmic atom becomes seven atoms on the plane of matter, and each is transformed into a centre of energy; that same atom becomes seven rays on the plane of spirit, and the seven creative forces of nature, radiating from the root-essence. . . follow, one the right, the other the left path, separate till the end of the Kalpa, and yet are in close embrace. What unites them? Karma.' "

This represents the process of differentiation, which as stated previously results in manifestation of a cosmos. The quotation continues:

"The atoms emanated from the Central Point emanate in their turn new centres of energy, which, under the potential breath of *Fohat*, begin their work from within without, and multiply other minor centres." (S.D. I, 635; II, 360 6-vol. ed.; I, 697 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*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Hammer on the Mountain.* Life of Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) by Howard Murphet. Published 1972 by the Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. xii + 339 pp. Price \$7.95.

A biography of Colonel H. S. Olcott, one of the three founders of the modern Theosophical Movement, was long overdue. An extraordinary person, whose accomplishments were many and considerable, his career was far more colourful than that of many of his contemporaries whose lives have already been recorded in biographical form. Over and above his achievements on behalf of Theosophy, his contributions to other fields were of such significance that it is surprising his personal history has been neglected for so long.

Howard Murphet's attempt to remedy this situation is good, but falls short of what is needed. On the credit side, to a large extent he has managed to capture both the character of the man as well as the spirit of the age. Olcott's youth and early career, and even his collaboration with his "chum", H. P. Blavatsky, are treated skilfully and for the most part sensitively. But when the declining years are reached, the narrative takes on a saccharine quality and credibility is stretched. Unfortunately, it is this period, the years between Blavatsky's death in 1891 and Olcott's in 1907, that is of particular interest to Theosophists; it was then that the Society's character and direction became fixed for most of the twentieth century.

What a pity this promising biography has let us down! And why did it fail? In a footnote referring to a controversial affair the author frankly states the story is "...as seen through the eyes of Colonel Olcott." Therein probably lies the answer. Such is not the function of biography. Olcott was quite capable of writing his own history, and did, almost to the end. What was—and still is—needed is an objective reappraisal

of his participation in those long ago events.

The President-Founder of the Theosophical Society has been dead these sixty-five years. No one living would be hurt if an impartial study of his last decade were published. True, some members would like to see him, and others who followed him, put on a pedestal, but what is served by this? On the other hand, a fresh examination of his failures would not only meet the requirements of biography, but would also be instructional. Members of the Society, especially those who accept organizational responsibilities, might see their own difficulties in better perspective by learning how he coped with, or fell short of meeting his monumental problems.

After noting his weaknesses, Olcott's accomplishments seem all the more impressive. The manifestation of his talents in such different fields as agricultural science, journalism, the military and the law, is indicative of his brilliance. He was an organizer *par excellence*, and needed to be when faced with the challenge of putting the Theosophical Society on its feet, to say nothing of his ecumenical endeavours on behalf of Buddhism.

Over and above these attainments, however, stood a strong character. He was compassionate, but just; indefatigable; in some things, stubborn. If anything he was too good-natured, and in his tired old age some took advantage of this—even to our present cost.

In spite of its disappointing concluding chapters, *Hammer on the Mountain* makes for interesting reading and is to be welcomed for the information it contains. No Theosophical library should be without it.

— Ted G. Davy

\* \* \*

*The Dark Face of Science*, by John Vyvyan. Published 1971 by Michael Joseph, London, England. 207 pp. Price 2.25 pounds.

"Knowledge is a two-edged sword, and it depends on the character of those who have it whether it is a blessing or a curse."

So writes John Vyvyan (P. 135). His wise observation epitomizes the philosophy of this book which is concerned, as is suggested by the title, with some of the uses of knowledge that are a curse on humanity. It is not anti-science, but rather anti-cruelty.

Essentially this is a history of the British anti-vivisection movement in the twentieth century. The history is not merely one of events; it is also a record of the efforts of those (few) souls who sacrificed and fought against the pain and suffering of animals. (Caused, ironically, by those whose motive was ostensibly to relieve pain and suffering.) From these pages we might conclude that there have been many more heroes in our midst than those whose deeds have been publicized and honoured by society. Some of the leaders of the anti-vivisection movement evidently possessed many other qualities than kindness, and their unselfish actions at least deserve this permanent record.

Let me make it quite clear that *The Dark Face of Science* is not an emotional, oversized tract of the anti-vivisection movement. Every page, every line, is a protest against cruelty, but never once does Mr. Vyvyan allow his emotions to colour the ugly pictures he has necessarily portrayed. His style is authoritative, his approach reasonable. Moreover, his gift for writing fine prose carries with it added impact; for example, it is one thing to read of concentration camp atrocities in newspapers - here, they seem to take on a new dimension which does but accentuate the horror.

There are many lessons to be learned from this record of the struggles to control vivisection. One is that the scientists and technicians who are the vivisectioners are not the only problem, indeed, they are only part of it. Over the years there has existed an entrenched establishment which tends to protect the interests which pay for the "experiments" (in the name of medicine, the healing science, let us remind ourselves) on helpless dogs, cats and animals

of all kinds. Some controlling legislation has been in the books since the nineteenth century, but its implementation and application has been another matter. Unfortunately, as these pages reveal, administration of the anti-cruelty laws has often been controlled by the vested interests of the opposite faction.

Mr. Vyvyan skilfully depicts the implications to humanity of the type of thinking that endorses unnecessary, man-made cruelty. Human vivisection is only one step away. He also leaves us a chilling thought - what, if, in the course of space explorations earth humanity meets a form of life superior to ours but with similar morals. . . ?

In many of its aspects, this is a terrifying book. But it is one that had to be written. Some comfort can be taken in the very fact that it has been published. It is an indication that there still live fighters who are determined to combat the terror it describes, and if it alerts others to the dangers of the cursed side of knowledge, it will have served its purpose well.

— Ted G. Davy

## IMPORTANT NEW EDITIONS

*Light on the Path*, written down by M.C. (This edition includes the comments by the author and also the essay on Karma.) Published 1972 by The Theosophical Publishing House Ltd., London, England. 67 pp. Price 75p.

*The Works of Plato*, translated from the Greek by Thomas Taylor. A photographic reprint of the 1804 edition. Published 1972 by AMS Press, New York. In five volumes. Price: \$105.00 the set.

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# STRANGE DUALITY

The Universal motive force, which is circumscribed in Man,  
Expressed in deeds, creates in him a semblance  
Which he believes to be that which I AM.  
Bound like Prometheus to the rocky shores of Earth,  
Prey to every passing mood and self-created fear,  
Awaits the hour which rends the veil and lets the light appear.  
To rend this veil which binds the Soul and illuminate within,  
First Man must come to understand and know  
What binds his Soul and keeps him slave  
To a Self that knows no soul.  
With mind alert he scans the field and sees the enemy,  
And like Arjuna feels the grief for those whom he must slay,  
For they form his very self, creations of desire.  
How can he come to free himself from this all-consuming fire?  
And then an inner voice awakes and asks  
What makes you think you have a Soul: and  
For what seek you to be free?  
What is it in me that brings to light this strange duality,  
For what is WHAT in this context, can it possibly be ME?

— A. Tyro.

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