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THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Later this summer, or in early fall, members of the Theosophical Society around the world will cast their votes for the candidate they deem most worthy to serve as President for a seven-year term. Their action (or inaction) will to some degree determine the nature and effectiveness of the Society as it approaches and passes its first one hundred years of existence.

This is an appeal to all eligible Canadian members to exercise their voting rights. Here it should be explained that in accordance with the Rules of the Society the Electoral List will contain the names of only those members who have been in good standing for at least one year prior to the close of the official year. These members will receive their ballot forms in August.

At the time of writing the names of the candidates are not known. At least two have indicated their willingness to be nominated; it is understood that others are considering. In any event, it looks as if there will be more competition for the Society's highest office than at any other time in our history. This could be a good thing, and at the very least should stimulate interest in the election.

Why an election? A stranger, writing from London, asks to what purpose do we want to elect another President and argues that ". . . an organization of true Theosophists would never feel an inner need to select a visible external leader."

One can appreciate his viewpoint. Indeed, if it were a matter of selecting a spiritual leader, or guru, his point would be well taken. But the question is begged. Whether we like it or not, the existential fact is that we have an organization of members — most of whom would probably prefer to be called students of Theosophy rather than Theosophists — which for the foreseeable future requires a leader capable of running its day-to-day affairs.

Let's face it: the person we elect will be faced with one of the most difficult jobs anywhere. To be blunt, the President of the Theosophical Society is no figurehead. The office is a full time responsibility (double time if we relate it to conventional hours of work) for which the remuneration is nominal. To administer any organization of this size is no easy matter; an organization as diverse and widespread as ours calls for exceptional qualities and abilities. Some corporation heads hold the title, "President and General Manager", and perhaps this more accurately describes the duties of the President of the T.S. But whatever the title, there is no doubt that hard work lies behind it.

There are signs of rejuvenation throughout the Society. The electors in the 1934 and even 1945 elections were part of an organization that was much different to the one we know. In fact, much that is taken for granted today would not have been tolerated then (as in many other aspects of

small-s society). The new President will thus take office in an environment that will allow, if not encourage, innovation. Flexibility and creativity will therefore be desirable assets.

In short, the President we want must have many qualities. Perhaps none of the candidates has them all. Never mind. Each will grow in office.

Members of the Society: please vote for a President worthy of the T.S. and capable of transforming it into the type of organization that will be a fit vehicle for further dissemination of the Divine Wisdom.

— T.G.D.

SELF — INTEGRATION

FRANK P. BOUCHER

First of all, what do we mean by integration?

My interpretation is — the bringing together of many parts to form a whole. Let us take a block of concrete for example: we have gravel, sand and cement, but until these are blended together and water added to consolidate the mass we do not have complete integration.

It is the same with Man. Until he understands the principles upon which he is built, and the reason for his existence here on earth, he cannot fully understand his purpose in life and the true meaning of self-integration.

The teachings of the Christian Church (the way they were taught to me, at any rate) state that man is composed of three parts — body, soul and spirit; that the body is “dust”, because as we are told, “For dust thou art and to dust shalt thou return”; that soul and spirit in some way survive; and, if our faith was strong enough, we would gain a reward in Heaven — or if it were not strong enough, or we had led a life of sin, the reward would be Hell. There was no in-between in either case, and no hope of return.

If we follow these teachings back to their source we find we have been grossly misled and that there is a much deeper meaning. We find the body is not lost, but only changed, and that the soul and spirit do survive.

This is the basic teaching of the Ancient Wisdom — Theosophy, as we call it.

By following the tenets of Theosophy we discover it teaches Man to “find himself” — that there is Reality in the words found in the Book of Books: “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” It teaches that man must study and understand his own nature, not only what he has been and is, but also what he will be when he understands his Divinity.

There is a saying by one of the old Eastern philosophers that, “The pain caused by a burden weighing on the head may be relieved by others; but suffering from hunger and thirst can be removed by none unless the man himself eat and drink. Also, sickness does not depart by speaking of medicine unless the medicine is drunk.” This embodies the teachings of the great sages and seers of all ages — we must work out our own salvation.

All through his earthly life Jesus pointed the way. “Seek and ye shall find — knock and it shall be opened unto you — the kingdom of God is within you.” We must discern, or rather learn to discern, between the Real Self, and that which is not-Self.

“As we think, so we are.” If we force our minds to concentrate upon the physical body we shall be bound by the strong bonds of “desire”. The heritage of Man is man himself. The Law of Karma, the law of

cause and effect, that as we sow so shall we reap, falls on all alike — the just and the unjust. The world is ruled by ideas and ideals and it is only the greater ideals that are the essence of Theosophy which will prevent utter chaos in the world today.

I am prepared to admit that happiness can come from the satisfaction of a desire, but it is limited by its own nature, and is of short duration. For one desire immediately gives rise to another, so the moment of happiness ends in further anxiety. Should these desires be gross and materialistic, our Path to the Real Self will be long and arduous, but if our desires are towards the spiritual we shall always find helpers and teachers ever ready to lead us. The Master Jesus said, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." It has been said, "When all the desires that were hid in the heart are 'let go', the mortal becomes immortal and reaches the Eternal."

When Man reaches the stage where material things are really of no importance, he learns from Theosophy that the physical body is but an outward covering of other bodies — the astral, mental and causal bodies — and that these are the most important parts of Man.

We must find this out for ourselves. Nothing, no teacher, or scripture can do the work for us. To my mind the only Theosophical teachings are those that point the way to the Path and Self-Integration.

Modern science does not give complete satisfaction. It does admit that consciousness, in varying degrees, may be present everywhere. It admits that elements can be changed into other elements. Also, that identity is only provisional, and what is more, it does not exclude the idea of Absolute Reality, even though it does not accept it. We all know we exist. We are all aware of our own consciousness, but the question so many ask is — Why? What is the meaning of it all, and how is it going to end? In other words, we are anxious to "know ourselves".

To me, Theosophy is the only source of answers to these questions. It postulates

that Man is a composite being; that according to the Laws of the Universe we are all inter-related; that we are ONE, and that only ignorance divides us from this knowledge.

When Man once realizes this knowledge and the purpose of life, and the way this purpose can be attained, his whole outlook changes. One great lesson he learns is the fact that "all men are brothers" and that spiritual progress can be attained more rapidly by cooperation than through individual competition, and that the real goal lies within himself. Wherever we look in life, whatever we consider or study, we find that the individual working alone is helpless. We find this even in our own physical makeup — each part of our system and even each action is dependent on another part or parts of our being. We find there is no freedom so great, no happiness so large or wide-reaching, as the giving of self in service.

In one of his lectures, Norman Pearson said, "The Ancient Wisdom tells that Man is a fragment of Divinity passing through this school of life in order to gain experience. He lives life after life and dies death after death but, in reality, he lives but one everlasting life." All this we learn from Theosophy.

We find Theosophy is based on three absolutely essential things for the welfare of mankind: Religion, Science and Philosophy. These are not three fundamentally different things, but like the three sides of a triangle inter-related to each other — they cannot be separated. Three ways of looking at Truth. Theosophy is not based on dogmatic statements. We have no dogmas or creeds. Thus it is that there are Hindu Theosophists, Buddhist Theosophists, Mahomedan Theosophists, Christian Theosophists, and those belonging to no religion. Theosophy does not demand blind obedience or adherence to any particular doctrine, but calls on everyone to study what he reads and hears and then to formulate his own beliefs.

Our late President, Mr. N. Sri Ram, tells

us: "We will find in the *Gita* (the teaching of which is set against the background of the Chariot symbolism) a perfect example of the integration of man — the Chariot representing the body, the Horses the outer and inner senses, and the "sense objects", the paths they travel. The Horses (that is, the senses) are to be controlled by the Driver (Divine Intuition) by the aid of the reins of *Manas*, (the mind). The Lord, or rider, in the Chariot being the *Atman*, the Light of the One Self which pervades all things. Man, following the "Right Path", finds all is harmony. The Horses in his Chariot indeed may move with the independent life with which in the past he has endowed them; nevertheless, the reins, a harmonious mind, are fastened in their mouth, and the other end of these reins is in the firm hand of Divine Intuition. Move they must, and will, but only in the direc-

tion that is desired by the calm, far-seeing eyes of the Divine Charioteer."

In closing let me quote Mr. C. Jinarajadasa. "If a man cannot believe in all the teachings of Theosophy, let him at least act as Theosophy teaches. He will find the word Theosophy describes a wonderful Reality, and when he knows, with every fibre of his being, and in each moment of time that all that he is — his highest love and sacrifice, his fullest faith and offering "IS" that Reality in him, and that apart from "IT" he has no existence, then he will find within himself an instrument of knowledge by means of which he can discover ALL for himself."

"God's Truth is within Man's own Nature."

How more can Theosophy help Man achieve Self-Integration?

WHY DO WE NOT REMEMBER OUR PAST LIVES?

F. J. DICK

This is one of the questions so much easier to ask than to answer. Its enunciation involves half truths, and contradictions, which seem so obvious that it is easier to turn away from the problem than to face it, even intellectually. Yet it is capable of perfectly logical and scientific treatment, granting a sufficiently unbiassed mode of approaching the question, and we must try and shake ourselves out of our ruts and grooves in considering it.

First, who are we? Are we more, or less, than we suspect ourselves to be? Are we really *owners*, so to speak, of a long procession of varied lives amid all imaginable surroundings of power, of service, of brilliancy, and of gloom, the memory of which is merely lost for a time; or are we heirs to some vaster memory *not* our own? Are we merely bundles of mental

impressions which flicker and die, never to reawaken; or are we like feeble candles burning outside the flame-temple of our real selves; to be entered sooner or later, or not at all, as we choose?

I love contemporary thought, notwithstanding its beautiful error, tottering metaphysics, and general denial of everything sacred. To what can we advantageously address ourselves if not to, and largely in terms of that thought? Good deeds and thoughts are a mighty power; but if we venture into the region where the men and women of our time are *asking* these questions, we should see whether it is not possible to answer very much in terms of the thought of the time. Be it noted that in order to do so, students may dig more or less deeply in Eastern psychology, but it does not follow that they should invariably

offer the spoken *thought-forms*, to say nothing of the *words*, of the East, to those whom they would fain help; especially when we remember how little of really occult thought-forms is translatable by our ill-developed Western *brains*, even though these sometimes reach our *hearts*.

Our past lives! What an astounding conception! It is too astounding, perhaps. There must be a flaw somewhere. It rings true somehow, yet it seems not true; why is this? Who, then, are *we*? That is the point. The answer of Theosophy is, *we are Mind*. Now I venture to think this is not *obviously* true. It takes some time to make this out. We have to reflect a little before we will admit the truth of this. I will go further and say that one has usually to go through a good deal of pretty stiff self-analysis, and perhaps suffering, before he is at all ready to admit it. As it is, many people would even be prepared to scout the idea. Yet it is most important to firmly grasp this conception, because until it is grasped we can make no progress with our subject. And let me say at once that by *Mind* we must *not* understand *Intellect*. *We* are more than *intellect*. The latter is a semi-automatic affair, a good deal connected with memory, of which we will speak presently. *Intellect* is not the real Thinker, and moreover, does not suffer, is not swayed by emotion, does not aspire or despair. But *we* do that is to say, *Mind* does. It is for want of due discrimination between *intellect* and *mind* that the control of the *passional nature*, etc., seems at first to point to no other result than the production of a purely *intellectual*, and therefore cold and unfeeling being, whom we perhaps picture as "grieving neither for the living nor the dead." *Mind* really includes perception and experience of form and material qualities,

of sensations of different kinds, of abstract ideas, of tendencies and desires, and of mental powers. These five are *we*, not separately, but collectively. Now this is also a creative and energising power that works from, and in the centre of our being, the heart. The brain, moon-like, in one aspect merely reflects the life of the heart. "Regard earnestly the life that surrounds you. It is formed by the hearts of men!" And this power selects and works with one or more of the five essential functions, thus creating, and being in turn affected by, its environment, on the one hand, and modifying, and being affected, by its essential organism on the other.

This organism must occupy our attention for a moment.

It is twofold in its essential history and evolution, the elements of form and sensation, etc., resulting from a long past, and prodigious evolution, and the others (really older; but joined to the former at a later date) partaking of the nature of mind, which at a certain period descended into, and ensouled the former elements. It is only necessary to consider one other point in this connection in order to prepare us for the solution, intellectually at least, of the problem which engages us.

This organism is held to be but the external shadow of a variety of subtle organisms, one within the other, in different regions of mind-substance, or on the subjective side of nature, and each of these regions has its atmosphere of mind-stuff, so to speak, on which are recorded the impressions therein produced.

In each region the mind and its five essential functions — its organism — react on each other in a certain manner. In our ordinary waking state the mind uses certain of these functions at present in such manner as (1) to prevent the equal action of the remaining ones in modifying and refining the organism, and (2) so preventing the conscious control, or rather the perfect co-operation of the mind over the whole. In other words, our minds, that is *we* ourselves, are largely absorbed in

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perceiving forms, material qualities, and sensations, and further swayed by certain mental tendencies and desires. The sphere of the mind is not rounded out by the partial suppression of these three essential functions with the simultaneous cultivation of the remaining two (which deal with abstract ideas and mental powers), in such manner that the whole action of the person shall be under the sway of mind joined to will, rather than of its vehicle. When this rounding out of the nature occurred, we would be sufficiently steady and purified to receive impressions from the inner and subtle organism hailing from an evolutionary period far exceeding that of the lower vehicle.

From these considerations it will be seen that we are entities using our outer mind-organisms in an imperfect manner, and that as the method of using them becomes more equable and perfect a subtle law connects them with the next higher mind-organism. Now the mental powers form part of our mind organism, and these include memory. A procession of forms, sensations, abstract ideas, and mental tendencies impress themselves in detail during life, in the *atmosphere* of our ordinary mind-organism, and become reproduced in the brain in four different ways. Firstly, automatically, by the stimulation of form or of sense perceptions, as the odour of a flower recalling instantly a scene. This kind of action is frequent, and is what is ordinarily called *memory*. Secondly, by an idea taken up; as, for instance, we think of kindness and some observed event of that nature immediately recurs to our consciousness. This is also frequent and is called *remembrance*. Thirdly, by the wish to recall details of a certain subject or experience. This is generally accompanied by a more or less severe effort of the will, occasioning thereby a slight paralysis momentarily, of other centres, and thus allowing the pictures that exist in the atmosphere of the mind-organism to again impress the brain. This is less frequent and is called

recollection. The fourth kind of *memory* of the before-mentioned procession of sensations and ideas which have occurred during present life is the abnormal one active in trance or hypnosis. It is of the same nature as the third, but the action is more perfect owing to the complete paralysis of the other centres of the ordinary mind-organism. Now, I have already referred to the nature of the action taking place in the whole organism during this procession of events. It moulds, and is in turn moulded by these events. In short, the dynamic *experience* of these events, and thoughts, is built into us, so creating continually a fresh sum total of mind-organism. The mind-organism then is built up, not by memory, but by experience. The physical memory is merely the recorder of passing events, and *not* the preserver of experience. "It is but the outer husk of experience." Experience relates to *feeling* and *consciousness*; memory but to time and sensation, and is at best but the record of an illusion. The events recorded in our atmosphere precipitate their essence (so far as it can be assimilated) into the mind-organism. Memory reproduces portion of this record in terms of time and sensation, but in the inner sphere they exist, as we have seen, *all at once*. "Time is but the space between our memories. As soon as we cease to perceive this space time has disappeared. The whole life of an old man may appear to him no longer than an hour, or less; and as soon as time is but a moment to us we have entered upon eternity."

So far, we have up to this spoken of ourselves as identical with our mind-organism, consisting of the five essential functions. This is *more* than the truth for many of us for the time being, but far less than the truth potentially and in actual fact. We have pictured this mind-organism solely in connection with recent experience, but we must remember that it was already a complete organism when this recent experience commenced. Most of the sensations and desires of early

childhood have completely disappeared from voluntary recall, yet we were there at the time with our organism. inner as well as outer. Who among us could even trace back from day to day the events of school-life? Nay, could we trace in detail the events from the 31st January back to New Year's Day? If we consider the matter, the wonder is not, why do we not remember? but how can we possibly forget so much! One reason, of course, is that we are not yet masters of the five essential functions of our mind-organism as already stated. Another reason is, and this is the important one in connection with our subject, that we have been building the experiences into us, while leaving the recording power in abeyance.

Thus it happens that there are many things we say we know, while yet we cannot recall the steps by which we know them. Now this is, so far as we are concerned at present, the essential and distinguishing quality of the fifth kind of memory not yet referred to *reminiscence* the memory of the soul, the subtler mind-organism lying immediately behind or above, the one in current use; the Higher Ego in fact. The mind-organism that we have hitherto spoken of, and identified rightly enough with ourselves, is yet not the Higher Ego, but only its illusion-body, the personality. Now, this illusion-body (not the physical body) with its five essential functions modified continually by present life experiences is yet the entity which has been developing upward slowly from mindless animal-man, under the fostering care of the descending Ego, through many lives. They are closely connected, though apart, and the consequence is that our personality is overshadowed by these built up experiences known without the power of recalling details. Most of this usually seems to lie dormant, but is far less so than we often suppose. Everyone is largely guided by intuition. Many successful commercial and professional men have admitted this. It is an intuitional perception apart from the physical brain, or any

known concatenation of experience. In its most obvious and easily recognised form it is seen as genius, an ecstasy of inward vision, the essence of many memories, the synthesis of former experiences. Now, there are two points that at once occur. First, this genius is not *memory* of past lives, and second, we have here the fuller entrance of the Ego into its vehicle, the illusion-body of an incarnation. Given the power of genius, why does this memory not accompany it? Here we have a really important re-statement of our question, because so evidently nearer the domain of our higher, though undeveloped nature.

The reason is that the personal mind-organism, though here more fully in touch with the Higher Ego, has not yet mastered the use of that mental power which examines or comes into *rapport* with the atmosphere of the higher organism. It cannot, in point of fact, do so without first paralysing all that goes to make up the lower mind-organism, or personality. In short, the Spiritual Ego can act only when the Personal Ego is paralysed. Or, again, the Spiritual Ego is the real Thinker, and the Personal Ego is occupied with the five essential functions, things thought of. Hence the meaning of Patanjali's aphorism. "In concentration, the soul abides in the state of a spectator without a spectacle." Thus only can the divine voice be heard. We see then that the Higher Ego speaks dimly to us in our waking life; not by records of past events, but through the small portion of their synthesised experience that can be reflected into the personality or mind-organism, appearing there as the voice of conscience, premonitions, intuitions, etc. But we also see then that the precipitated results of past experience endure in the subtler mind-organism, and are carried along with the Higher Ego, not as accretions, but as essences, which impress themselves more or less on the new mind-organism that is grown out of it in each new incarnation.

"Reminiscence is to memory, what the spirit is to the physical body."

It is clear then that in order to enter into the being of the Thinker, the Higher Ego, man should learn to gradually free his consciousness from the illusions of sense and time, and it is also clear that we need help and guidance as to the mode in which this is to be accomplished!

We see then, roughly, how it comes to pass that we do not remember our past lives. Firstly, they are the past lives of the emanations of the Higher Ego, not of our present personalities, and secondly, we have not led the life necessary to place our mind-organisms *en rapport* with the Ego. If we did so we should not be long, I think, in gaining some glimpses of the wider life-cycles of which we now but exploit a small corner.

We cannot get at the past by the intellect, but we can so train the memory as to observe the action of the synthesising power

of experience. We should cultivate that particular mental power which enables us to recall in orderly sequence events from the present time backwards through our lives, tracing effects to causes in so doing. The steady pursuit of this form of concentration is indeed said ultimately to awaken the higher memory. Yet there is always the other side of this process to keep in view, equally necessary for harmonious progress in self-knowledge. "The Past! What is it? Nothing! Gone! Dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. It only concerns you as you now are. In you, as you now exist, lies *all* the past. So follow the Hindu maxim: 'Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubt with the sword of spiritual knowledge.' "

The Irish Theosophist, March, 1894

SMOKE

FLEET B. BERRY

Flame, since the days of our primitive ancestors, has been an inspiring symbol: The camp-fire fascinates us even today. Why?

The Ancient Wisdom is carefully preserved by the Adepts, the Masters of the Ancient Wisdom. In its written form it is safely hidden in secret places, in languages and formulas that can be understood only by those that possess the keys. Also, it is manifested everywhere in Nature. A little of it is given out directly to chosen, tested chelas like H.P.B. who have proved that they are fit recipients. The rest of us still have to develop ourselves through many, many difficult incarnations until we have the courage, the determination, the capacity and, above all, the moral stamina to contain and comprehend the Wisdom; no new wine in old wine-skins.

Today most knowledge is gained from

books, but when an idea is put into words, much of its life is lost. Communication on finer levels of consciousness is by means of combinations of sound and colour. The English language is quite inadequate for the expression of Occult knowledge. (See the Mahatma Letter, No. 8). But until we reach a more advanced stage of learning, we have to depend on books and the world around us. The Divine Wisdom is written everywhere in Nature for those with eyes that see and ears that hear and minds that understand.

A simple camp-fire is a whole library written in fast-moving symbols, the universal language. Watch smoke rising from a smouldering log. Suddenly there is a quick burst of flame as the smoke ignites. It is gone in the twinkling of an eye. What might be read? A searching soul has at last purified and raised its desires to a higher

rate of vibration and transmuted the smoke of its delusions into flame.

By the light of this flash of spirit, the soul has glimpsed the world beyond. The curtain, at last, has been parted for an instant and given a vision of another world.

This first small flame, quickly smothered in the smoke of desire, shows that wood is reaching a temperature (rate of vibration) at which it can change from solid to gas to light and heat. This first flash is a promise of what can follow IF the breeze of mind continues to fan the coals.

If the courage and the determination to persevere have been developed, after this first peek through the curtain, it will not be long until the soul is all ablaze and will be living beyond the solid, physical world.

To begin our camp-fire, there was much careful preparation. A suitable spot, a bare rock, was chosen and hard dry wood was gathered, cut up and arranged. Then the initial spark had to be procured. Primitive man could produce this with a bow-drill, a little powdered wood and much physical effort. Since 1875, we are much more fortunate. We have boxes of matches in the *Mahatma Letters*, *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *Voice of the Silence*, and the Theosophical Society. How easy it could be to start the fire that will cremate our animal nature and raise the puny self to union (yoga) with the Self!

The first little flash will not give much heat but, with persistence, there soon can be a hot fire. Now come further tests. More and more wood is needed to keep the fire going. Past Karma provides the fuel. Some of it is so green, wet or rotten that the fire may almost die out before the lessons have been learned, the heap of rotteness changed to the flame of spirit. The Masters warn us not to seek higher consciousness before our lower nature has been mastered and our moral fibre toughened. Each of us knows of many instances in our daily lives when we have been tested and have failed. It may be disastrous to try to swim in the rolling ocean after only a few lessons in a protected pool.

There is not space in this article to review all or even a few of the books in this library of the camp-fire. Perhaps, with luck, this may be the match that will ignite someone's fire of imagination as he gazes into the flames in search of another book.

One is a book of symbols. The vertical flame rising from the horizontal log suggests the cross of man with the circle of light about it. Four elements: earth, water, air and fire, all found in the camp-fire, perhaps, could illustrate the principles of man. Then there is Parabrahm, the First Cause, which, without diminishing itself lights all other flames.

Books of Karma, Reincarnation, Rounds and Races — all the Divine Wisdom is in our library on a quiet evening, on the shore of a peaceful lake, a green canoe nearby, and, behind, a cosy tent. Perhaps a full harvest moon may be shedding her orange light as a loon awakens echoes.

CRYPTOSOPHIA

Here is a familiar quotation from a well-known Theosophical work. In its present form it is not easily recognizable because it is hidden in a cipher.

Can you decode it? Each letter of the alphabet simply stands for another letter.

What is the quotation, and from what book is it taken? Answer on page 71.

VYZLIY GSY ELRWY WUM HKYUP

RM GSY KIYHYMWY LZ GSY

NUHGYYH RG NFHG SUEY OLHG GSY

KLDYI GL DLFMX.

THE SNORTING SERPENT

THEOSOPHY TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

F. W. WILKES

The Gnostics believed as we do, that man is both a native and a stranger on Earth, and that he is fated eventually to attain release from his bondage to the world and to escape to his original home in the realms of light. The material world that he inhabits is seven-fold, though the seven concentric globes are surrounded by a starry region. Each sphere is ruled by an Archon who is its constructor, though all seven Archons are ruled by the real creator, Demiurge. Man himself is surrounded by seven soul-vestments, which separate the divine spark or pneuma from its original divinity. His condition is ignorance, which is the essence of the material world, and the existence of the divinity from whom he originates cannot be deduced intellectually from his situation, but only from faith, which arises from that gnosis or knowledge, that enables him to escape. In so doing, he frees his own divine spark of pneuma, and contributes to a rehabilitation of the divine substance.

The reader may remark that this is suggestive of Theosophy, and that Carl Jung was right when he remarked of Theosophy that it is "pure Gnosticism in Hindu dress." But he will be wrong, as Jung was wrong, for the beliefs listed are not pure or simple Gnosticism. Pure or simple Gnosticism did not exist, since Gnostic beliefs included many other ideas that few, if any Theosophists would willingly profess. If the Gnostics manipulated a system of ideas so near to ours, "and came, as most men deem, to little good," ought we not to examine their way critically, and go by some other? Theosophy ought to consist of a continual widening of horizons, and if within them there are craters, emitting a sinister ticking noise, ought not someone to clamber in and defuse the bomb? One can but call for expert volunteers.

Most profoundly different from ours is the attitude of the Gnostics toward the world and their religion. This attitude was polarized in extreme rebellion against anything except the purest and most remote divinity. The Gnostics were not interested in the brotherhood of man, and would almost certainly have used all the hydrogen bombs they could have got hold of, had such infernal devices been obtainable in the second century A.D. They regarded the world of human existence as being bounded, not by a salvageable Karma, but by Heimarmene, inexorable doom. The seven soul-vestments were layers of corrosive pollution, the seven spheres were the concentric walls of a prison, the Archons were warders of a Cosmic jail, and everything discernible was the malevolent creation of demons. Essential to Gnosticism was the learning of magical passwords to allow the outward-bound human spirit to evade the ferocious vigilance of the Archons.

Two diametrically opposed moralities were deduced by the Gnostics from their credo. One was utterly ascetic, shunning all contaminating human contact; but the other was bewilderingly nihilistic. The "antinomian libertines" argued that possession of the Gnosis, knowledge of one's true condition, liberated the owner from all sanctions. Since, being repeatedly turned back to Earth by the Archons, the soul is reborn constantly, she must in time perform every action in every kind of circumstances. Until the soul has committed every deed, she is not released from the wheel of rebirth. From this arises the doctrine of antinomian libertinism, that the Gnostic had an obligation to violate the terrestrial laws incessantly in order to

(Continued on Page 67)

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Mr. and Mrs. Iverson L. Harris, of San Diego, California, were welcome visitors to Toronto June 16 - 17. They made brief stopovers in this city and in Ottawa on their way home following an extensive tour of Europe. Although they were on a delayed honeymoon trip, they had participated in Theosophical activities in every country they visited.

Unfortunately, their intended stay in Canada had to be curtailed because of flight delays. In a very short time, however, they won many new friends here. Mr. Harris was last in Toronto in 1954 and was happily remembered by older members. Others, who have been corresponding with him over several years, were delighted with the opportunity of seeing him in person.

It was fascinating to hear Mr. Harris' reminiscences of the Point Loma Theosophical Community. This was also the subject of a public lecture he gave at Toronto Lodge. He lived and worked at Point Loma from 1899 until 1942 and for many years was private secretary to Madame Katherine Tingley, the founder. He knew intimately many famous Theosophists who studied and taught at Point Loma, including several who had been pupils of H.P.B. Mrs. Harris also shared with us some interesting memories of the famous Community, where, incidentally, she was born.

* * *

A few days later Toronto members were privileged to meet another distinguished Theosophist, Mrs. Gool Minwalla, Presidential Agent for the Theosophical Society in Pakistan. Mrs. Minwalla was visiting several centres in the U.S.A. and Canada on behalf of the international Montessori organization, and stopped over in Toronto, where she conducted

examinations, to spend some time with members of her family.

Mrs. Minwalla studied directly under Dr. Montessori when that famous educator worked at Adyar during World War 2. As well as her educational activities she is a prominent social worker whose achievements are known beyond the borders of Pakistan.

We were especially interested to hear from Mrs. Minwalla how the Society is faring in her country. In spite of the differences between our two cultures it seems that the Theosophical situation is very much the same in Pakistan and Canada. The challenges and the problems fall into a pattern which changes little throughout the Movement. By way of further interest, Toronto Lodge has a close link with the Karachi Lodge, whose President, Dara Mirza, is a former Toronto member.

* * *

Students of *The Secret Doctrine* will be pleased to hear of the new publishing venture called "Secret Doctrine Reference Series", Its aim is to reprint key 19th century books that were quoted in Madame Blavatsky's great work, but which have long been unattainable, even in second-hand copies.

Two books in this series were reviewed in the last issue: *Sacred Mysteries Among the Mayas and the Quiches* and *The Book of Enoch the Prophet*. Others already published are: *Key to the Hebrew-Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures*, by J. Ralston Skinner; *The Gnostics and Their Remains*, by C. W. King; and *Esoteric Buddhism*, by A. P. Sinnett. The books are in hard covers and are verbatim reprints.

This is a wonderful opportunity to supplement a reference library useful for Theosophic study. For further information, write to Wizards Bookshelf, Box 66, Savage, Minnesota, 55378, U.S.A.

* * *

Delegates to the 1972 North American Theosophical Students' Conference last

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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.

RANNIE PUBLICATIONS LIMITED
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October saw the footings being dug for a new book storage facility at Wheaton. Recently the new warehouse was opened.

Hard on the heels of the relatively new Theosophical Publishing House, the building is a tangible indication of the success of the Quest Books. The warehouse has a capacity of 9,000 square feet and will store books for which space was previously rented. The cost savings and added convenience will help increase the efficiency of an already efficient organization.

Theosophical seals are being sold by Sophia Enterprises, a project department of the American Federation of Young Theosophists. The seals are printed in blue on white gummed paper and perforated. The profits will be used to establish funds for other AFYT projects.

The cost is \$1.00 for 168 seals and the price includes postage. To order, send a remittance covering the cost of the desired amount to SOPHIA, 534 Spruce Road, Bolingbrook, Illinois 60439, U.S.A.

* * *

I am pleased to welcome the following members into the fellowship of the Society: *Members-at-large*. Jean Labrecque, Sandra Tickell, Dale Tickell.

Montreal Lodge. Judith Wooldridge. *Toronto Lodge*. Augusta Bankwitz, Leah Milne, William Milne, Claire Shales, Anni Toivonen, Jouni Toivonen, Laura Wood.

T.G.D.

MONTREAL LODGE

Montreal Lodge celebrated White Lotus Day on Tuesday evening, May 8, in the Lodge Room. Appropriate readings were given and there was a good attendance of members and friends. Refreshments were served after the meeting.

It was indeed a privilege to bring Miss Judith Wooldridge into the Lodge as a new member on this occasion. We welcome Miss Wooldridge most sincerely into the Society.

Miss Muriel Kerr, the Lodge's efficient and hard-working Treasurer is leaving Montreal shortly to be married in Vancouver. We wish her much joy in her new life. Mr. Fred Griffiths, the Vice-President, has consented to take on the task of Acting Treasurer, for which the Lodge is very grateful.

Mrs. Dorita Gilmour will be going to Victoria at the end of Summer, so Montreal Lodge has to say "Goodbye" to these earnest workers and fellow pilgrims. The work must go on, however, without attachment. We send these members on to

their new undertakings with gratitude for the work performed for Montreal Lodge and the Theosophical Society.

Out of town visitors are cordially invited to visit Montreal Lodge if they are in the city. The Lodge Room is situated in the Medical Arts Building, 1538 Sherbrooke Street West, Room 1007. The program will recommence in September — meetings take place on Tuesdays at 8:15 p.m.

V. P. Law President

TORONTO LODGE

White Lotus Day was celebrated on May 8 with a selection of readings and the playing of the Moonlight Sonata.

At the Annual Meeting of the Toronto Lodge held on May 16 a total of sixty-seven members were present and the following officers and directors were elected for the ensuing year:

President Mr. Fleetwood B. Berry
1st Vice-President Mr. Stanford L. Treloar
2nd Vice-President Mrs. Joan Sutcliffe
Corresponding Secretary Mrs. Kuky Bayley
Recording Secretary Mrs. Marie Schlauch
Treasurer Mrs. Barbara Treloar
Directors: Mrs. Vera Berry, Mrs. Jean Frazer, Mr. Malcolm Goodall, Mrs. Audrey Hallas, Mr. William Kidston, Miss Amelia Saumur, Mrs. Carola Schmitt, Mr. Wolfgang Schmitt, Mr. Alan Sutcliffe.

The Lodge welcomed Mr. and Mrs. Iverson Harris on Sunday, June 17, when they visited Toronto on their way back to California from Europe. Mr. Harris spoke at the Sunday evening meeting on "Forty Years at the Headquarters of The Theosophical Society, Point Loma". Afterwards, those present had an opportunity to meet and talk informally with Mr. and Mrs. Harris.

On Wednesday evening, June 27, Mrs. Gool K. Minwalla, the Presidential Agent for the Theosophical Society in Pakistan, who was visiting her son and his family in Toronto, kindly agreed to give a public lecture from the Lodge platform on "Theosophical Thought in Sufi Mysticism."

ANNUAL PICNIC

A record number attended the joint Annual Picnic of the Buffalo, Hamilton and Toronto Lodges, held on June 16. Every seat was filled on the bus that carried the Toronto contingent; others made their way by car from various points. Again this year, the destination was Niagara Falls.

This time it was necessary to choose a new site because the familiar picnic facilities at Victoria Park, near the Horseshoe Falls, have been removed. A lovely spot near the Niagara Gorge, further down the river, was selected and it proved to be a good choice.

Close by the picnic grounds, for those who had the stamina, were wooden steps leading down the deep sides of the gorge. (It was easy going down!) The rugged scenery afforded by the ancient rock and the turbulent river, although so different from the famous Falls, is missed by most visitors to the area, but it is well worth viewing.

Nevertheless, few can resist the opportunity of seeing the Falls. Familiarity with them never breeds contempt. It was therefore arranged that, after lunch, the bus would take those who wished for a tour of the district. It was yet another opportunity for sightseeing, and there was more to come. It is now almost a ritual to stop at the Welland Canal on the way home, and once again the timing was right to see a large freighter passing through the locks.

A chance to chat with old friends from other Lodges is always one of the attractions of the Annual Picnic. For the children (and there were more this year than ever before) it was an afternoon of playtime and ice-cream. Young or old, however, all seemed to have a good time in their own way.

To the organizer, Alan Sutcliffe, goes much credit and thanks for a well-planned outing. Even he could not arrange the right weather, but in spite of an overcast day it rained only when all were under shelter during lunch. Altogether, it was a delightful picnic.

CENTENARY PLANS

... what has been accomplished so far:

It is definite that we shall celebrate the Centenary in New York City. The dates will be November 14-20, 1975, which period includes Foundation Day. It is also definite that the place of the celebrations will be the Statler Hilton Hotel.

We are working on obtaining special rates at the Statler Hilton so that as many members as possible will be able to stay on the spot where the programs are to take place. . .

Within the period of November 14-20, 1975 will be held the Vth Inter-American Theosophical Federation Congress. . Also the North American Theosophical Students' Conference for 1975 will be held within that period.

We hope to have a Commemorative Stamp—a stamp commemorating our first President, Col. Henry S. Olcott — and you will hear more of this later.

... In the spring of 1974 the transportation costs can be established. We repeat our earlier suggestion that you start saving NOW.

As your Committee sees it, the Centenary celebrations are every member's concern — a joyous time of coming together to review what has been done in one hundred years and to look ahead to what can be accomplished in the next century. We shall need many members to "man" the various booths and services. We need volunteers to:

- . Welcome members in New York in every language
- . Provide information of all kinds in all languages
- . Assist with Registration
- . Provide other skills such as typing and clerical services
- . Provide hospitality for those who are strangers to New York
- . Assist with arranging and supervising exhibits
- . Provide music for the many programs and a multitude of other volunteers. Let us know what you can contribute.

We expect to have the program in New York tentatively arranged by the Spring of 1974 and to have rates for transportation fairly definite, also the special rates at the Statler Hilton and much more information that you are waiting for, as you contemplate the journey you will take. . .

In the Footsteps of the Founders.

Ann Wylie, Chairman
Centenary Activities Committee

— From *Centenary Activities Committee Letter No. 2*

N. SRI RAM

COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE

The June 1973 number of *The Theosophist* is a Sri Ram Commemorative Issue in honour of the late International President.

There are articles on Mr. Sri Ram by James S. Perkins, L. H. Leslie-Smith, I. K. Taimni, Seymour D. Ballard, K. K. Shah (Governor of Tamil Nadu), Curt and Kerstin Berg, Geoffrey Hodson, B. Shiva Rao, Sigvaldi Hjalmarsson, V. Wallace Slater, Laurence J. Bendit, Joy Mills, Gladys M. Bowerman, J.E.C. Van Dissel, Achyut Patwardhan, Bertha and Daphne Darroch, Walter Ballesteros and a number of workers at Adyar who knew the late President closely.

Eight photographs of Mr. Sri Ram, taken at different periods in his life, and an artist's sketch of him are included in the issue.

Prices, post free: India, Rs.1-25 per copy; America, \$ 0.50; British Isles, £ 0.13; Other countries Rs.1-75. Subscribers will receive the number in the normal course as the June issue without any additional payment. New subscriptions can be commenced with this number on receipt of a year's subscription.

Copies may be ordered from: — The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 600020, India.

SRI RAM'S MESSAGE

C. TON PHAN

As Sri Ram has just passed over to a greater light, it is timely to acknowledge the great work he has done among us and for us. Sri Ram was different from all his predecessors in the Presidency of the Theosophical Society. While H. S. Olcott was the fighting founder, A. Besant the warrior, G. S. Arundale the foreseer — all having a very powerful impact on the crowd, C. Jinarajadasa and N. Sri Ram were surrounded by much less glamour.

Jinarajadasa had made a tremendous contribution, but not many were aware of this. I would call him the instrument. But up to and including him, the "classical" teaching had been followed, taught, spread, lived. Then came N. Sri Ram.

The first impression Sri Ram gave me was not of a radiance but of an absorbing moonstone. He did not strike one as brilliant or shining; he was of a more delicate type. He did strike me, though, by his "unshining". I felt inspired by him, but even so there was no brilliant core. Rather was there the absence of a core.

Sri Ram's attitude, when he met you, was not to face you but to let you be yourself, unaffected by his presence. One word frequently used in his talks and writings was "negative". Negative, in the sense explained again and again by him, was Sri Ram. This negativeness is even more profound than openmindedness. You can open your mind more or less — the fact of opening implies a previous enclosing. But, like the negative photographic plate which is impressed by all images, a negative mind lets all thoughts enter it without segregation. Another analogy is the still surface of a lake in which the whole sky, coloured or not, with or without clouds, will be reflected without restraint. This is what Patanjali termed "the suppression of the modifications of the mental substance (chitta)".

Sri Ram was also the first President who

dared answer a question left unclarified by former leaders: "Leave Mars to its own destiny, it must know exactly what it has to do." Yes, Sri Ram was the first Theosophical leader to have freed himself from the intellectual aspect of the "classical" body of Theosophical teachings, without tearing the Society apart as Krishnamurti did some fifty years ago.

Sri Ram was, in the full sense of the term, a philosopher. As he wrote in "Meeting Death As A Friend":

"In the literal meaning of the word, philosophy is love of truth, and love implies action...Most men estimate the value of things by the pleasure which they afford, but the aim of the philosopher is to free himself as much as possible from the domination of the body...As he has given up all attachment to the pleasures which come to a person through the body, death is nothing but an exit through an open door."

It might surprise those who have known Sri Ram that he says "love implies action". In line with his philosophical negativity, Sri Ram was well known for "not-acting". Sometimes his apparent non-action did cause shock and disappointment. But the following excerpts from the fourth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* describes his attitude fully: "He who seeth inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is harmonious, even while performing all action."

So was Sri Ram. Always even, always harmonious, never allowing himself to be pulled or pushed by any action. With Nykalanta Sri Ram a wise man has left us. Shall we keep his message?

Right thought, right feeling, right action
— these are the way to peace. — N. Sri Ram

PENANCE: THEOSOPHICALLY ANALYZED

MONTAGUE A. MACHELL

"Have I done penance for my sins? None at all. And yet it is certain that I shall have to account for everything, to the uttermost farthing. Therefore I must always remember I am in debt to the Lord; my scrupulous attention to even the least of my duties is therefore a strict obligation in the eyes of justice."

—Pope John XXIII Journal of a Soul.

The Journal of Pope John XXIII is a heart-moving examination of man's relation to his Spiritual Source. Its insistence upon a narrow, personal perspective, however, lessens its redemptive power. For since an insistent contemplation of the earthly man, together with an insistence upon a personal God, is the cardinal sin of mal-focussing The Pattern of Life, its rejection or transcendence must be one step toward a sane redemption.

It must always be borne in mind that man, a duality of potential good and evil, inhabits a world, the conditions and perspectives of which are powerfully polarized in the direction of unredeemed Matter, which the church terms "Sin". This being the case, a too persistent contemplation and self-identification with the latter, tends rather to nourish and energize it. On the other hand, a recognition of the fact that the divine self of man has the power to transcend the sinful self, together with a consistent identification with the Angel, rather than the Demon, gradually glorifies the former, while starving the latter.

In a universe governed by immutable law, man's slightest disturbance of the harmony of that law must be rectified by him who set the disturbance in motion. Being sorry for what he has done is a rather ineffectual reaction on his part; "doing penance" is apt to be little more than applying a salve to his sense of guilt. His personal punishment cannot be a guarantee of a restoration of harmony, nor an effective elimination of sinful tendencies. But, a clear recognition of his

identity with all life, and his individual responsibility for the inviolate integrity of all life, move him to view his sinful action as it relates to all mankind. More vital and immediate is the urge in him to restore the harmony of universal law than any consideration of escaping an imagined punishment. To the soul of man, what happens to him is irrelevant, as compared with what he has inflicted upon his fellowman. In his inmost self he perceives that, he, having disturbed the universal harmony, he alone can restore it, a restoration which he accepts as his personal responsibility to all mankind.

There is ample justification for the conviction that an inborn sense of responsibility to humanity, springing from a clear understanding and acceptance of Universal Brotherhood, is a more positive and permanent deterrent to sinful action than any fear of punishment. But — he who will be so deterred must be *educated* as to the nature of man and his universe, and the laws governing them. The sin and shame of the world have their roots in faulty and inadequate education, wherein rewards and punishments have usurped the place of knowledge and aspiration. A man who knows that the Law works; that as a man sows, so he also reaps, be it in this or previous lives; that the ills, disappointments and heart-aches of this life are of his own sowing in an earlier time will, sooner or later, replace fear and penance with understanding and resolve.

Growth of the inner man is a positive experience, that can never be hastened or intensified by the negative experiences of

fear or self-abasement. Since this mortal personality is tainted with the limitations of time and materiality, he who would glorify his god will daringly assert the valor of his Spiritual Self, glorying in the accomplishments rendered possible by that assertion. He will disdain to allow a consideration of the mortal man to weaken or distort his determined upward progress. To him "salvation" will depend for its assurance upon a constantly cultivated *spiritual rationality*. To contemplate any "heaven" attainable by a special dispensation he will regard as pusillanimous — as not "playing the game" of consciously exerting his spiritual manhood. Once having tasted the limitless potential of the Divine Man in the heart of him, he will make "living" an unhesitating avowal of *triumph*. The Heaven, from which he went forth, he knows, expectantly awaits his return; knowing this, he strides forward joyously and without a "by your leave"!

To be deeply conscious of a divine destiny is to seize it unconditionally. After all, this realized destiny is only his so far as it is

shared by *all mankind*. No rational Theosophist would contemplate for one moment "getting to heaven" *alone*; His spiritual striving is at all times a fearless campaign for the fulfilled destiny of all mankind, since we are all brothers in the Spirit. The dedicated Theosophist lives "to benefit mankind". And is not that a drive sufficiently dynamic to make aspiration a potent weapon against "sin"? Living is Growing — in spiritual awareness. Man's "scrupulous attention to even the least of his duties is therefore a strict obligation in the eyes of justice"; the wise man knows that "duty is that which is due to humanity". To be in love with humanity is to be in love with Destiny; and, as the Welsh poet, Kenneth Morris, sings:

But there is no roof above
 When I think of what I love,
 And there is no earth beneath,
 I am one with life and death;
 And my world is larger far
 Than the realm of any star,
 And within me, deep and deep,
 Universes wake and sleep.

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. At one of our meetings I was asked a question, but did not know how to answer it. A young student asked: (a) On the earth, what happened before the mineral stage? (b) And was the mineral stage produced on another globe of the Earth system before this globe? Does *The Secret Doctrine* give any information about this?

Answer. Yes, indeed. Answering (b) first: Upon awakening from their pralayaic condition, the Monads now representing the

Mineral Kingdom appear on the first globe of the planetary chain (the first globe is designated Globe A). After pursuing seven stages of evolutionary development thereon, the monads passing through the mineral stage descend to Globe B, and follow seven stages of evolutionary development on that globe. After accomplishing these seven stages the monads descend to Globe C and then on to Globe D — our Earth.

Answering (a): *The Secret Doctrine*

states: "there are three elemental Kingdoms which precede the Mineral (see diagram on p. 277 in *Five Years of Theosophy*)." (S.D. I, 177; I, 230 6-vol. ed; I, 200 3rd ed.)

Turning to the work mentioned, further information is supplied:

"There are seven kingdoms. The first group comprises three degrees of elementals, or nascent centres of forces — from the first stage of the differentiation of Mulaprakriti to its third degree — i.e., from full unconsciousness to semi-perception; the second or higher group embraces the kingdoms from vegetable to man; the mineral kingdom thus forming the central or turning-point in the degrees of the 'Monadical Essence' — considered as an Evolving Energy. Three stages in the elemental side; the mineral kingdom; three stages in the objective physical side — these are the seven links of the evolutionary chain." (*Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 276 - 7).

Thus, "there are three stages of elemental evolution; i.e., the three successive stages passed by the spiritual impulse (through the elementals — of which little is permitted to be said) before they are imprisoned in the most concrete form of matter" (that is, the Mineral Kingdom). *Ibid*

Question. Another young student asked: What comes after Nirvana, and how is Nirvana described?

Answer. Nirvana may be described as a state of absolute consciousness in which the immortal constituents of the human constitution are in subjective existence. In *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* Nirvana is described as "the Great Reward, the grandest, in fact, since it makes of the Ego (though he may never have been an adept, but simply a worthy virtuous man in most of his existences) — virtually a God, an omniscient, conscious being, a candidate — for eternities of aeons — for a Dhyana Chohan. . . a state. . . in which all things objective are forgotten. It is a state of

absolute Rest and assimilation with Parabrahman." (p. 198)

In *The Secret Doctrine* the monads are described as entering "into the Nirvana which awaits them between the two chains" (S.D. I, 173; I, 226 6-vol. ed.; I, 196 3rd ed.) — that is to say the period when a planetary system enters into the state of pralaya.

After Nirvana there is another period of activity; termed a Manvantara for a planetary system:

"For it is said in the Sacred Slokas:

"The thread of radiance which is imperishable and dissolves only in Nirvana, re-emerges from it in its integrity on the day when the Great Law calls all things back into action.'" (S.D. II, 80; III, 89 6-vol. ed.; II, 83-4 3rd ed.)

The "Sacred Slokas" are the Commentaries on the Book of Dzyan. The "Thread of Radiance" is also called the Thread of Fohat or again the Sutratman and is described as being imperishable, for it re-emerges from Nirvana when the new Manvantara sets in motion.

Question. In *The Secret Doctrine* it is stated: "Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of Duration" (Stanza I, sloka 2). Then on page 2: "eternal, ceaseless Motion, is called in esoteric parlance the 'Great Breath'"; and on page 9: "what is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a universe or not? . . . and the answer made is — SPACE." Then on pages 15-16 it is stated that there is the triad of Parabrahman, Mulaprakriti and Fohat. Two of these components are the same as in the first triad referred to, but I do not see how Duration can be equated to Mulaprakriti. Please explain.

Answer. In the instances given it is not a matter of equating the triads. Two triads are indeed presented for consideration, but they represent two different concepts. The first triad deals with the concept termed the "Ever-existent," that is to say it considers a state which ever IS, whether there is a period of activity (termed a Man-

vantara) or a period of rest (termed a Pralaya) — whether pertaining to a universe or a cosmos.

On the other hand, the second triad deals with the process of manifestation — the coming into being of systems, whether universal or cosmic. Parabrahman is equivalent to Space; Fohat to Motion; whereas Mulaprakriti signifies pre-cosmic root substance, hence original substance prior to differentiation — that from which Spirit and Matter originate.

The correspondent who sent in the preceding technical question also sent in this one:

Question. Has anything been written about the significance of the dying man's last uppermost desire?

Answer. Although not finding anything in *The Secret Doctrine* to reply to this question, it is an important one to consider. As a reference to this was made in *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, the following passage is supplied. It is from Letter No. XXIII-B and was written in reply to Mr. Sinnett's comment — which was made in this manner:

"You say: — 'Remember we create ourselves, our Devachan, and our Avitchi and mostly during the latter days and even moments of our sentient lives.' " (page 147). The response follows:

"It is a widely spread belief among all the Hindus that a person's future pre-natal state and birth are moulded by the last desire he may have at the time of death. But this last desire, they say, necessarily hinges on to the shape which the person may have given to his desires, passions, etc., during his past life. It is for this very reason, viz. — that our last desire may not be unfavourable to our future progress — that we have to watch our actions and control our passions and desires throughout our whole earthly career." (page 170)

THE SNORTING SERPENT

(Continued from Page 58)

carry out the programme as soon as possible and gain release. To perform such a prolonged debauch must have been more difficult than to gain the heights of asceticism, even were such clownish conduct practicable in a policed and peace-loving Roman world.

Ascetism was more frequently practiced by dedicated Gnostics, since disuse of the laws is as extreme as abuse of them. The libertine did too much honour to the Archons by taunting them, while the ascetic ignored the world they had made, becoming purer while remaining dignified. And again, the ascetic gained time in which to experience enlightenment and ecstasy, while the miserable libertine merely acted out his "Clockwork Orange". Nevertheless, for the Gnostic, no law of virtue could be extracted from the world except in a negative relationship to it. The anarchy of antinomian libertinism in its incessant and frantic commission of sins is not consistent with life in a religious community, and its proponents must be considered as mere propagandists flinging a challenge. All Theosophists who attend open lodge meetings will recognize, and perhaps sympathize with the type, and there is a very real clue here to the utter misuse that Gnostics made of their travesty of the Wisdom teaching.

* * *

The Greek philosopher Anaximander (610 B.C.) believed in a plurality of worlds, in which an eternal sifting motion separated gross from fine. Universal harmony, justice, or "Necessity" prevented any one element from exceeding the other. All things, the gods included, inhabited fixed bounds, policed by Necessity, which reabsorbed into the Indeterminate Boundlessness any element that overrode its limits. Such "injustice" is thus balanced in a Karma-like fashion. After all as Anaximander pointed out,

since air is cold, water moist and fire hot, if any were infinite, by his time all would be cold, or moist, or else hot. By this time the Orphics were preaching the transmigration of souls (not reincarnation), and insisting, against Homer's authority, that the soul was not a faded body.

Pythagoras (532 B.C.) presents us with a bewildering collection of disciple's and Master's teaching, all mixed up. Pythagoras invented pure mathematics, and declared himself to be a Master, midway between man and god. He preached release from the wheel of rebirth and from the body which is a tomb for the soul.

To Pythagoras, mathematics possessed the Orphic property of arousing ecstasy by sympathetic contemplation, sudden comprehension and revelation of a world of harmony and order. Mathematics manipulated ideas in pure form, independent of the senses and of the changing world of dying animals, rotting plants and weather-worn stone. Mathematics became the source of unshakeable belief in Truth eternal, exact and ideal, in an intelligible world not apparent to the senses, only to disciplined thought. Pythagoras demonstrated that the world of the senses is imperfect and irregular. Thus thought is higher than sense and ideas are nobler than perceptions. Plato was able to elaborate on this doctrine, which was implicit in Pythagoras. All this from a Master who (it is alleged) warned his followers never to step over a crossbar, or to walk along the highways, or to let swallows nest on the roof!

Plato and Socrates, in the fourth century B.C., coming after pure scientists such as Democritus and Anaxagoras, took a fresh look at philosophy. Socrates, more interested in man than matter, defined goodness as a concept and a quality, a common element in all good things. He noted that all earthly good is incomplete and qualified. Plato brought out the universality of Pythagoras' and Socrates' teachings. Men only approximate to the

immutable and eternal concept of Man, as do all things living and corruptible. The imperfect realization of pure ideas is only the shadow of them, but man, by his power of thought, participates in the ideal world, as well as the imperfect world of the senses. Man dwells before birth as a soul in the ideal world of pure ideas and when after birth he lives in the body, can still recognize in shadow-like material objects and qualities the indwelling images of the ideal.

Aristotle objected that Plato left a gulf between sensible objects and ideas, which neglected to reveal the mechanism that caused objects to imitate or foreshadow ideas, Aristotle posited a Principle that manifests the Idea in the phenomenon. The Universe of nature is a hierarchy of species, all drawn by the Unmoved Mover (Pure Being, or Thought) in a process of self-perfection and spiritual development. Aristotle was a logician, and his philosophy is usually regarded as one of Becoming, while Plato's is Being, though both include both. In Aristotelean philosophy, Man's purpose is activity, in Plato's, a quality. For Plato, the Good was transcendent ('over there' as in Theravada Buddhism), while for Aristotle, it was immanent ('all around us' as in Mahayana Buddhism.) Aristotle objected to Plato's duality of body and soul, and insisted that a particular soul must inhabit a particular body, a kind of Karma. But Aristotle's God is the Final Cause of phenomena, who does not concern himself with this world and has *no* plan for it.

In Aristotle's time, the Greek city-states came to an end as Alexander conquered the Middle East and left it to his tyrannous successors, the Diadochi. This Greek conquest of the East led, at least so far as cities and culture were concerned, to a genuine and voluntary merging of ancient civilizations and the appearance of a 'Hellenistic' culture from Syracuse to Samarcand. The Roman Empire added a Latin Far West (Carthage-Cadiz-Cologne-Carlisle) to this Greek-speaking East-plus-

West. From the battle of Issus in 333 B.C. until Mohammed is nearly 1000 years. Even before Alexander appeared to take advantage of it, the Greek culture of the fourth century B.C. had reached a maturity in which universal rationalism led the intelligence away from parochial city-state ideas towards the concept of civilized cosmopolitanism. Anyone who spoke and read Greek was Greek.

While this movement was beneficial to mankind in general it exhibited certain traits of what some of our contemporaries call "cultural genocide", and evoked a fruitful reaction in the Semitic languages. Throughout the classical Roman period this situation remained stable, so that the Tyrian Malech ('King') could, in the third century A.D. translate his name into Porphyry.

By Alexander's time, the Ancient East had ceased to produce any classic literature, and Eastern culture generally was at a low ebb, as Daniel's vision of this Oriental Dark Age shows. Local religions vanished as belief in local gods declined. Pure Judaism emerged (Isaiah 2), with Jews in Babylon and Samaritans in Palestine. Alexander's conquest smashed the Babylonian religion and left the religious Orient open to spiritual conquest. The Babylonian religion became astrology, while Zoroastrianism, losing the stigma and support of being imposed by Persian invaders, began to disperse its creed from Armenia to India. Everywhere such conditions created a vulgarized mixture of religions. After 100 B.C. it becomes impossible to disentangle Greek from Oriental in Hellenism. Even the Classical Greeks had balanced their contempt for foreign "barbarism" with a profound respect for priestly antiquity, and throughout the Hellenistic into the Roman period, antiquarian accounts of Oriental cults tend to turn into esoteric sermons. Where Greek culture had contributed politics and philosophy to the secular Hellenistic culture, the Orientals spread gods and cults wherever Greek was spoken,

and even beyond, as far as Britain.

Greek philosophy liberated Oriental ideas and spread them over the known world, but it did so by translating them into abstract concepts, reasoned theories and rational expositions, where they had previously been images, symbols and myths. Without this "Logos", we in the modern world probably would not know anything of the ancient oriental religions, and indeed, what we do know is coloured and transformed by Greek thought and Greek grammar into such abstract ideas as Dualism, Predestination, Monotheism and Transcendence. In the beginning was the Word, indeed.

It was this process of "cultural genocide" that ended the Ancient Middle East. We cannot blame the Greeks for this; the Ancient East, thinking itself perfect, had ceased to innovate or to produce literature and ideas. A new East, presaging Islam, had meanwhile arisen, in which the images and myths of the Ancient East are included in the same way, and for the same reason, that Isis was worshipped in Rome and London — a combining of religions, syncretism, and a mixing up of gods, theocrasia, occurring without plan or guidance.

* * * *

Astonishingly, however, this disordered and unsightly pile of rubble began, so to speak, to reconstruct itself as a series of similar temples around a 'new spiritual centre,' a new religious entity called gnosticism. (We distinguish the largely optimistic small-g gnosticism from the more pessimistic Gnosticism by a capital letter). This architectural revolution did not occur as an event but a process, traceable from the dispersal of Hellenistic Judaism and the Alexandrian Jewish school of philosophy, through the extension of Babylonian astrology and magic, and the spread of fatalistic beliefs into the West, along with the more optimistic mystery religions, with Christianity up to the rise of the transcendental philosophies of the Roman Empire.

All these "Temples" were grouped around a common "court" and all had consequently the same outlook. Christianity took centuries to try and cleanse itself of this syncretism, without ultimate success. Traces of all these Hellenistic movements can still be discerned without difficulty in Christian teaching and tradition. Christianity grew up in this universal gnosticism like a crystal in a solution. The late antique world was in a sense, this solution.

The Roman writer who called himself "Dionysus the Areopagite" was a Greek gnostic who used the gnostic angelogy, planting it wholesale in Catholic mythology, where it flourishes in Dante's "Divine Comedy", and he was an important influence upon the Hermetics of the Renaissance. On the other hand, Marcion of Sinope, the most Christian of the gnostics, was thus the most resolutely denounced by the Church fathers as a dangerous heretic, and it is no exaggeration to say that much of the Catholic creed was specifically devised to distinguish Christianity from Marcion's gnosticism.

The challenge of Gnosticism was that it did not deny the order of the Cosmos, but repudiated the excellence of order. What the Gnostics denied was the belief that the Cosmos contained or was God, while they asserted that the law and order prevalent in it were tyrannical and malicious. The cosmos was retained with all its characteristics and contents except God, who was placed at a great distance, outside it. The common principle of all Gnostic systems was that man is utterly alien to the universe and alone in it, while 'cosmic' is synonymous with evil. Unlike the Vedantic Maya, the Gnostic Cosmos is real and solid and not an illusion. From being an innocent or neutral chaos, the Stoic and Gnostic Cosmos had become its opposite, a rigid system of all-pervading order. Cosmic law was not rational, liberating or informing, but an astrological fate, thwarting and imprisoning the soul.

Stoics, Neoplatonists and Christians chorussed their disapproval of this Gnostic blasphemy against the divine Omnipresence. But one aspect of ancient religion, the astrology of Babylon's observatories, had from the start implied an ambiguous fatalistic attitude, good or ill fortune being decided by Necessity in the remorseless circling of the stars. The order in the Cosmos that the classical civilization most revered was the perfection of the starry motion and epicyclic intricacy of the planets. The eternal and harmonious order was disclosed here in its purest and most obvious form. The assurance of its eternal effortless movement, combined with the intelligence implied by the intelligibility of its motion, demonstrated that there was coexistent with the Cosmos a Reason of cosmic dimensions. Submission to the fate destined by the stars was justified to a late Stoic as the price the individual paid for the enjoyment of cosmic harmony, comparable to the taxes of a city.

To the Gnostic, again, all this obvious and eternal precision was acknowledged, but with a transvaluation. The perfect spherical form of the Cosmos was a perfected and efficient prison. The blaze of the vast star-strewn sky was to the Gnostics a terrible and glaring self-assertive arrogance. To what scarcely conceivable lengths the Archons had gone, establishing such cruel perfection to enslave mankind! Where the Hellenistic star-gods had been rendered abstract by philosophers, the Archons rose as bleak, grim and concrete as towers. The Gnostic felt that he belonged to God, that he did not belong in the world, which separated him from even knowing about Him. The Cosmos was an ignorant and malignant force, not chaos, but a brutal order of unjust, iron law, raw power dispensed by the stars from a pitiless sky.

Though Rome "fell" in A.D. 476, the Byzantine government did not give up using Latin until about A.D. 700, when the ancient Middle East was already Moslem. For a thousand years, the Asians had been colonial subjects, and Stoic "cosmic

patriotism" did not appeal to them. Deluded as they were, we instinctively feel sympathetic, and for this there is another and obscurer reason, barely brought out by the protests of one of the best of men, Plotinus, against the Gnostic cosmophobia. Plotinus leaves us feeling faintly uncomfortable. Despite the absurdity of antinomian libertinism, and the misanthropy of Gnostic hermits, he complains that while the Gnostics hail the basest of men as brothers, they denounce the sun, the stars and even the world-soul as 'unworthy to be called their brothers' (*Enniads*, 2-18). This discomfort arises, of course, from our Judaeo-Christian background. Plotinus, feeling that stars and men were kin, preferred the perfect world-soul to the imperfect man. Gnosticism, like Christianity and Theosophy, believed in loving one's neighbour, though it did so with the solidarity of the oppressed, not with the prompting of justice and a virtuous conscience.

(to be continued).

BOOK REVIEW

Man And His Seven Principles, by Arthur Robson. Published 1973 by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. 186pp. Price Rupees 6-50.

This is a collection of articles which should be judged on their individual merits rather than as chapters of a larger work, which they were never meant to be. The first chapter is called "The Seven Principles of Man": perhaps, with "...and other essays" this would have been a preferable, certainly less misleading, title than that given to this book..

Having thus quibbled, let me hasten to say that the contents of the Book are well worth the time spent reading them. Every paragraph gives evidence of a fine mind directed to Theosophic study. Arthur Robson's probing examination of some of

the basic ideas contained in *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* highlights the essentials. There is no adulteration or dilution. His contribution is mainly the assembly and linkage of pertinent quotations; the commentary is humble and thought-provoking.

To give an indication of the wide range of this book — which is not evident in its title — here are some of the other chapter headings: "The Eternal Logos"; "Buddhi, the Wonder-Working Female Principle"; "Our World in the Making"; and "Man in the Making".

Quotations are all in bold face type — a welcome innovation. Unfortunately, the many quotations from *The Secret Doctrine* are identified only to 3rd Edition pagination. Surely it is time for T.P.H. editors to give references to *all* editions of this important work?

— Ted G. Davy

CORRECTION

In the obituary notice of Helen Vasanta Zahara appearing in the May-June issue the final paragraph should have read as follows:-

"In the same period she also served as Chairman of the American Section's Department of Education. But of all her activities she undoubtedly would have assigned a high priority to the Non-English Publications Loan Fund, of whose Committee she was first Chairman. Any one of these responsibilities would be a challenge to any capable organizer; Helen took them all in her stride and did a good job in each."

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