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THE NEW YEAR

At the dawn of another year we might, like Janus, the God of Time — the double-faced God — with one face turned to the East, the other to the West, look both to the past and the future.

The *Voice of the Silence* enjoins us to "Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost." Good advice indeed, for to dwell on those past actions or deeds about which we can do nothing, only saps the strength we need to tread the path ahead and face new experiences and challenges.

However, can we not look back briefly over the past twelve months in such a way that from the events, the joys, the sorrows or the pain, we can gather a few seeds of experience to sow afresh in the New Year, and hopefully by better husbandry improve the crop?

To continue looking back wondering what has happened to the other seeds, or what might have happened had we planted and cared for them differently, is useless. They may be harvested in future months, years or lifetimes, or they may have "fallen upon stony ground" and will bear no fruit. We cannot go back to replant them or tend them more diligently, but must accept whatever may result.

In many parts of Canada at this time of year a journey off the beaten track into the

winter fields and forests can be a rewarding experience: a day of brilliant sunshine; a cloudless blue sky; tall pines and firs in their winter finery; the stark but beautiful outlines of the deciduous trees; and, covering the brown earth and sheltering in their slumber many members of the plant and animal kingdoms, a thick mantle of snow.

In the midst of all, a silence that can be felt.

At the heart of that silence a faint pulse is gently throbbing. As the sun grows warmer and the days become longer the throbbing becomes stronger. The sap rises, the buds swell, the streams trickle and the rivers break the bonds of constricting ice with a mighty roar. A glorious resurrection takes place.

If we can tune in to that vibrant heartbeat of Nature our few seeds garnered from the Old Year can draw on that great impetus and in their turn multiply and spread abroad. From the fruits of those seeds we can again reap fresh experiences and learn new lessons. If we fail in the tending of our fields, we will pay the price with a poor harvest, but as surely as the cycle repeats itself continuously so we, being part of this great cycle, will be given another chance in succeeding days, months, years or lifetimes.

Writing in *Lucifer* in January, 1889, H.P. Blavatsky stated: "The astral life of the earth is young and strong between

Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently."

— Doris Davy

"THAT MYRIAD-MINDED MAN"

ERNEST WILKS

A commentary on the book of that title: That Myriad-Minded Man, a Biography of G.W. Russell — AE, by Henry Summerfield.

Foreword

G. W. Russell, better known by his pseudonym "AE", is primarily remembered for his literary work. Through his editorial contributions to two successive Irish weekly journals he became well known. As a poet and painter he did not achieve the same prominence; it seems rather that he used these forms of his art to express his deeper thoughts.

He was born in Ulster but centred most of his life in Dublin. His mystical experiences soon led him to the studies of the scriptures and philosophies of ancient India and the teachings of Theosophy. Before entering on his literary career he spent several years working with Irish peasant farmers, introducing a cooperative movement on their behalf with considerable success. Later, when he became well known, he was involved with the formation of a constitution for the Irish Free State following the institution of Home Rule.

This biography of George W. Russell (1867-1935), better known as AE, covers 288 pages and is most comprehensively documented by many pages of notes and references. It deals with a man whose greatness becomes truly appreciated only as we come to know him through studying his life and works. To those already familiar with AE through his writings, Professor Summerfield's biography will be greatly appreciated, as it provides information covering the more personal side of his life and activities hitherto unobtainable.

For those who have little previous knowledge of him, the author offers the following brief description:

"Some of AE's activities made important contributions to the life of the twentieth century. His greatest accomplishment was the creation of his own character. A gently mocking humour, an inexhaustible appetite for ideas, a benevolent courtesy extended to all comers, and a knack for handling statistics and obtaining results from committee meetings were underlaid and supported by an inner

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tranquillity which the pressure of external events could rarely cloud." (p.2)

That Myriad Minded Man deals with a person gifted with mystical powers and insight far beyond the ken of most of us. This at first naturally provokes incredulity, but as we come to know him for the human being he really was, we realize the "...extraordinary affection and hero-worship which he inspired in the most diverse persons." (p. xi) Likewise, understanding his ability to combine "...the practice of contemplative mysticism with an active life in the modern world" (p. xi) cannot but help to weaken our resistance to accept the mysticism and powers of such men as AE.

The saying, "By their fruits ye shall know them" is exemplified by AE's life as depicted in this book. Here is documented both his magnanimity and his selfless devotion to the needs of the lowly and of those in high places.

Students of Theosophy will be interested to learn of AE's allegiance to the teachings of H.P. Blavatsky, and that he became a member of her esoteric school. He was also personally devoted to William Q. Judge, and vigorously defended him against the accusations brought by Mrs. Annie Besant and Col. H. S. Olcott.

Starting with a resume of AE's parental background and the location and conditions of his formative years, attention is drawn to the beginning of those other worldly experiences which later developed into the mysticism which remained with him for the rest of his life. The author sets forth, with considerable insight and understanding, how the youthful AE finds confirmation of the spiritual concepts he had formulated from his mystical experiences. This commenced with the seemingly accidental opening of a book — the Upanishads — in a library. In this book he found his own ideas enunciated. "To his surprise and excitement he was discovering that the beliefs to which his experiences were leading him were similar

to those held by mystics of many ages and lands." (p. 22)

It is interesting to note that even at this early period of his life, AE conceived that his encounter with such books as those of Blake, Emerson, Whitman; and the Upanishads; as well as his relationship with W. B. Yeats, Charles Johnston and others, was no accident, but the result of his own karma. He conceived that "...a man's friends and enemies are equally brought to him by what is in himself." (p. 27)

The second chapter covers the years 1890-1894. In this period AE found employment in Dublin. Here he contacted Theosophy and joined the Dublin Theosophical Lodge. This was established in a large house located in Ely Place which not only became the Theosophical centre in Dublin, but also provided accommodation for members to live. Prof. Summerfield goes to considerable length to describe the vitality and enthusiasm existing here; the members, some of whom became prominent figures in the literary world later in life; and the impact of Theosophy on the youthful intelligenzia in Dublin. AE remarked that the seven years he spent there were the happiest in his life.

In 1892, the Dublin Lodge began publishing *The Irish Theosophist*, the whole work of editing, printing and publishing being done by the members of the Lodge.

AE found relief from the drudgery of his work as a clerk through his contact with the scriptures and philosophies of India, as well as a broad range of Theosophical literature, including Plato and the Hermetic writings, etc., which he began to study assiduously. From early in life AE was a gifted student, possessing also an amazing memory. However, it was due more to his mystical insight that he was enabled to sense the symbolism buried in the sacred literature, which made his writing and lectures so vital and engrossing.

In the latter part of this chapter, the author enlarges on the Theosophical teaching and AE's relation to it. Some

students of Theosophy may disagree with some of his concepts, but on the whole he deals with it with empathy and understanding.

The next three years of AE's life terminated that phase which was devoted almost wholly to the fulfilment of the aspirations that had been evoked both by his inner mystical experiences and by his contact with Theosophy and study of the scriptures and philosophies of India. During this period he became deeply interested in the legends and mythology of ancient Ireland. Later, he became "...convinced that the Druids had been the Brahmins of ancient Ireland." (p. 59) Also in this period, James Pryse, who became a well-known figure in the Theosophical world, took up residence in Dublin, and played a significant role in AE's spiritual progress.

The pattern of creation described in the cosmology of H.P.B. is covered at considerable length at this point, according to the understanding of AE and Pryse. Among the many items of interest introduced in this chapter is AE's revulsion to the domination of priests over the people through their teaching of eternal punishment for those who disobeyed them.

The prelude to the end of this period of his life is described in his struggle between "...the rival claims of human love and the spiritual life" (p. 84) which ended with his marriage to Violet North. Also, great changes took place in the Dublin Lodge which caused AE to feel "...that the time had come for him to break away from his well-established routine." (p.84) Resigning from his clerical position at Pim's, the large Dublin drapery store, he joined Horace Plunkett's organization for the promotion of cooperatives among Ireland's poverty stricken farmers — the Irish Agricultural Organization Society.

"Though he yearned to travel on the lonely journey back to the Spirit and to guide kindred souls on that path, he was constantly mindful of

the example of the Buddha's renunciation and he longed to serve all mankind... He entered Plunkett's movement and though he was often to wonder that he, a poet and mystic, should be instructing farmers, he knew that he had not made the less noble choice." (p. 85)

The next chapter, "A Poet Among the Farmers", opens with a description of the life and conditions of the people with whom AE was to devote most of his energies during the next seven years of his life. Ignorant, poverty stricken, and torn by "fierce antagonisms between different sections of the people." (p. 86) Horace Plunkett's aim was to alleviate this condition by the introduction of various forms of cooperative institutions and credit banks that had proven successful in other European countries.

His first encounter with the misery and poverty of the peasant farmers left him with little desire to carry on. However, after a brief holiday, and on the persuasion of his friends, he overcame his revulsions and resolved to continue. Inspired by his Theosophical background, which he never mentioned, his work was crowned with considerable success. It was his unique genius which enabled him to inspire in these people the virtues of self-help and cooperation.

An interesting incident at this time was the allegiance given by the members of the Dublin T.S. Lodge to Mrs. K. Tingley, who claimed successorship to Wm. Q. Judge as head of the T.S. in America after his death in 1896. Following a disagreement over a fundamental issue AE lost his former admiration for her, and later formed the Hermetic Society, which was mostly comprised of members from the former Dublin Lodge. Their studies thenceforth were devoted to the works of H.P. Blavatsky.

After about a year, Plunkett decided to accompany AE in his work. He became deeply impressed with the way AE inspired the farmers with hope and self confidence.

He later wrote to Lady Balfour: "I have never seen such a natural self-effacement — and this for the service of humanity upon no scheme of compensation here or hereafter. And while he outdreads us all, none of us have as shrewd business judgment or as nice a sense of humour." (p. 94) Realizing AE's extraordinary ability, Plunkett appointed him Assistant Secretary to the Organization.

It was shortly after this that AE married and took up residence in Dublin. The new position gave him more time now to devote to his writing and painting. In the telling of AE's activities during this period of his life, we are enabled to grasp some concept of his true character from the many events brought to our attention. One incident of note is the softening of his attitude towards the clergy of all denominations; this was brought about from his personal experience of the loving care with which they ministered to the needs of their poorest parishioners.

This period of AE's life ended with his becoming Editor of the *Irish Homestead*, which position . . . gave such scope to his talents that he became in time the most distinguished journalist in Ireland." (p. 124) This journal was published weekly by Plunkett's organization ". . . to disseminate cooperative news and technical information." (p. 125)

Under its vigorous and enterprising Editor, H.F. Norman, the *Irish Homestead* had become independently supported, and freed from former restrictions he was able to broaden its scope by introducing a leading article. This also afforded AE the opportunity to express his unique ideas to a broader public when he became Editor. Much of the turmoil and dissension which

occurred in Ireland during the following years is brought to life in the documentation of this period. Through his tireless and fearless participation in the events and problems besetting his country, he soon became a prominent figure. Some idea of the value of his views can be gained from the description of his visit with the Prime Minister during his stay in London in 1913.

In the next section of this biography the author brings vividly to life the passions which brought violence, bloodshed and civil war to Ireland. For nine years dissension raged between the Irish government and the Sinn Fein. The main issues of contention were the conditions required by Britain in giving Home Rule, together with the division of Ireland brought about by the nonacceptance of Home Rule by Northern Ireland. The Sinn Fein seemingly would accept nothing but complete severance from English control.

The events of this period contrast forcefully with AE's compassionate endeavour to bring sanity to the contending belligerents through his writings. The vision which predominated in his mind was the establishment in Ireland of a Cooperative Commonwealth. This, he conceived, would meet human needs better than socialism or capitalism. Unfortunately, much of the work in building up cooperative societies was destroyed at this time; and this, together with what had happened in Ireland, made AE realize that his ambitions for his country lay far in the future. It also gave rise to doubts regarding non-violence. He seemed to be ". . . no longer certain that the non-violence he had advocated . . . could have prevailed against Britain's effort to hold Ireland by force." Nevertheless, "when he took up the burden of the *Irish Statesman* he was as steadfast a Theosophist and a co-operator as he had ever been." (p. 217)

We gather from this reading that AE had a very lively anticipation of things to come. In the light of subsequent events, even up to

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the present day, AE's writings in the early part of this century are remarkable in their foretelling of future events. Their accuracy gives us some idea of his mental capabilities. He reflected:

"When people have no clear conception of a social order or a peculiar civilization to be built up, and are manoeuvred into a conflict which may result in the destruction of such forms of civilization as they possess, it seems to us that the struggle is like a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury signifying nothing." (p. 169)

These words were published a few days before Germany invaded Belgium in 1914. Of AE's attitude towards World War One, the author has this to say:

"The prophet and the moralist in AE made their pronouncements on the War. Three months after it began he interpreted the conflict in terms of cosmic justice or *Karma*, maintaining that war could not be ended by war or hatred, but only by their opposites. By the law of the universe human societies, whether noble or base, duplicated themselves, and as Egypt had been reproduced in Chaldea and Carthage in Rome, so the British Empire had evoked the German and had to face a trial of strength with its own mirror image. During the coming years he continued to prophesy that this would not be the last giant war and permanent peace was only to be won by the spiritual evolution of humanity." (p. 172)

By the spring of 1915 the horror of the conflict had begun to tell on AE's spirit. He recoiled equally from the mindless violence which prevailed in Ireland and the unprecedented holocaust on the continent. After 1914 he devoted his contributions to the *Homestead* to advising, admonishing and trying to guide the farmers and the nation during this period of emergency. AE's most interesting contributions to the

paper at this time are the many articles in which he prophesied future reactions to present events. He foresaw, for example, the urgent need to prepare for peace, since demobilization would cause large scale unemployment, etc. While he was away on his holidays in April, 1916, the Sinn Feiners had risen and seized Dublin. On his return he found the city in a state of war, and that his office and records had been destroyed.

The execution of the three leaders of the Dublin rebellion was a profound mistake, which AE predicted would have serious repercussions. Some of these men he knew, and while he did not agree with their resorting to violence, and did not share their ideals, he could only look with admiration, even awe, on men who had been ready to die for their beliefs. Early in 1914 the British government gave Home Rule to Ireland, but its implementation was deferred for the duration of the war.

The formation of a constitution was a matter of grave concern for AE, and he gave expression to many of his ideas on this subject in the *Homestead*. Later, in 1917, a convention was formed to seriously discuss the subject. Unfortunately, due to the positions taken by the Ulsterites and the Sinn Feiners, very little was accomplished, and in 1918 AE resigned.

The time and energy spent by him in his endeavour to find a solution for Ireland is well displayed here. His disappointment finds expression in his statement that it was a blind, all-engulfing hatred which was taking possession of so many Irish minds which most appalled him. He then became involved with the problems that he foresaw would arise after the war was over. Also, he realized the consequences that would follow if the conscription laws being discussed in Britain were forced upon Ireland. Fortunately, the war ended before they were passed.

It was in the spring of 1918 that his book, *The Candle of Vision* was published. Its success — it was reprinted five times in two years — was a pleasant surprise, as he felt

it contained so many religious heresies that it would give him a bad name.

With the coming of the armistice he joined in the general rejoicing but he soon began to realize the danger of imposing terms on the defeated enemy that would lead to another war. No sooner had the war ended than the savage guerilla war started between the Sinn Feiners and the Irish Constabulary, which was reinforced by the Black and Tans. The latter were mostly British officers from the war just ended.

It came as a considerable setback to AE when he heard that a number of creameries established under his cooperative movement were destroyed in reprisals to acts by the Sinn Feiners. In addition to this guerilla warfare which plagued the land, other problems arose. By 1921 the postwar depression had set in. Both in Europe and in the U.S.A. there was considerable unemployment. The passing of the Home Rule Bill, which granted partial self-government separately to both North and South Ireland did little to decrease the guerilla activity, which it had been expected to do.

Late in 1922, Plunkett “. . . was turning his attention to the importance of guiding public opinion.” He restarted the short-lived *Irish Statesman* as a non-party but pro-treaty weekly to this end, and offered the editorship to AE. This AE was at first reluctant to accept, as he realized that it would make far greater demands on his time than his present work and leave him little time for aught else. Also, it would mean severing the long association with his work on the *Irish Homestead*. However, as Plunkett agreed to include the latter — which was now in financial difficulties — in the *Statesman*, AE accepted the post.

On becoming Editor of *The Irish Statesman*, AE engaged a wider and more demanding field for his talents. “When the *Homestead* was succeeded by the *Statesman*, Ireland still had to raise herself from the economic and political chaos of the Civil War . . . The authorities . . . had not drawn up a distinctive policy to justify the

dream of independence for which so many had died.” (p. 222) The urgent need for such a policy became a prominent theme in AE’s columns as were also his pronouncements against the activities of “Young Ireland”.

Prof. Summerfield describes in considerable length and detail AE’s contribution to the formation of Ireland’s constitution and culture during the following years. When AE took over his new post he was already a well known figure, and he knew that his editorial columns would be studied by the nation’s intellectuals, and even by the ruling politicians. Although this added burden cut into the time he spent in painting and on his other literary work, he still found time to preside over his cherished Hermetic Society. It is interesting to note that he continued to denounce “official” Theosophy as spiritually barren.

The description of AE’s social life and his Sunday gatherings at his home makes an agreeable change. Among the innumerable new friends and acquaintances from all levels of society that met there was a Mlle. Simone Tery. “. . . this gay, sensitive, and acute young Frenchwoman was astonished to discover a man who was able to cater with equal ease to the spiritual and material needs of his fellows . . . (Who) while unobtrusively holding . . . to the moral standards of a Puritan . . . was wholly free from the Puritan’s self-righteousness . . . Above all, she felt the mysterious quality by which his very presence could radiate peace and happiness without his conscious effort.” (p. 220)

It is no easy task to portray that “Element” in us which makes us truly human. Locked in our mundane conception of what life is all about lies a chord which, if not too deeply buried, comes to life in us in response to our association with those rare beings such as AE, who embody that “Element” in every aspect of their lives.

Through his literary work, AE ventured far into the political, cultural and social life

in Ireland. He commented freely on the more important events and matters of the times. In 1928 he visited the U.S.A. He had long looked forward to seeing that country, and the opportunity to do so was afforded by a lecture tour arranged by his friend Judge Campbell. Apart from its success and the honours bestowed on him, it also allowed yet another side of his nature to be expressed.

The end of this phase of AE's life began to loom in 1930 when the financial support for the *Statesman* from America diminished. This was caused, in part, by the death of some of its original subscribers, but mostly by the Stockmarket crash of the previous year. In any event, AE began to feel that it was time for him to retire. He felt also that the paper had fulfilled its original purpose. "It helped to stabilize opinion at the start of the Free State . . . it was at first the only paper which gave the Free State a reasoned support." (p. 250) The last issue was dated April 12, 1930.

"The last five years of AE's life were occupied with a continuous battle against mental exhaustion, physical illness and social unease. As he struggled against the blunting of his faculties and the collapse of his hopes, the genius that had captivated so many would disencumber itself and flash out to astonish new friends; despite the burden of many sorrows, it was never extinguished." (p. 253)

While this period of his life was far from being uneventful, his visits to America were perhaps the most outstanding. The first was made in order to earn money for the treatment of his wife's illness; for many years she had been suffering from cancer, and being retired he could ill afford the expense. The tour was arranged in advance by a New York agency and covered a period of eight months, and going as far as the Pacific Coast and Canada. Later, in 1934 he made another visit.

In relating the incidents associated with these visits to America, AE's genius is

impressively portrayed. The enthusiastic reception of his lectures; and the interest in his ideas taken by those in the governing classes — even by the U.S. President himself — brings home to us the qualities expressed in this man. This is further shown by the manner in which people were stimulated by him to rise above themselves in his presence. Such experiences should not be passed over lightly, even in reading about them. If we will but pause and open up our minds on such occasions, new vistas of life can come to us.

The author's account of the events and thoughts of AE in the last years of his life bring to a crowning conclusion his portrayal through AE's life of that indescribable Essence which lies in all of us. This Essence, the Root of Man's true being, was exemplified in AE's life. For those who can respond to the call of that element in their lives, it inevitably points the "Way".

In conclusion, it is a salutary thought to consider to what extent the lives of such men as AE have raised Humanity in the scale of being, and to what level! In consideration of the enormous task that lies before us it may seem but a drop in the bucket. But who knows? Moreover, without the entry of such beings into our lives to show the way, what other means are there available to us?

The subordination of those elements within us which obscure the true nature of our being, thereby allowing it to reveal itself, was evidenced in much of AE's life. This example of humanity's potential is an inspiring thought with which to close this book.

That Myriad-Minded Man, a biography of George William Russell "A.E." 1867-1935, by Henry Summerfield. Published 1975 by Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, New Jersey, U.S.A. xiv + 354 pp. Price \$18.50.

ARE THERE LIMITS TO STRIVING ?

L. GORDON PLUMMER

"He who does his best does enough for us." —Master K.H. in *The Mahatma Letters*.

It is probable that most people at one time or another feel that they have reached the limits of their endurance. At such times it may be that some will wonder if it is worth the struggle. Can they cope with life? Most of us do, and we learn eventually to accept the fact that so long as we have put our best efforts into the solution of our problems, we can put our anxieties behind us and move on to the next thing with renewed confidence.

This preamble is leading to a consideration of one aspect of this subject that may be of interest to all who are seriously striving toward spiritual development along the lines that have been enunciated by the Mahatmas through their most prominent agent H.P. Blavatsky. She set forth certain ideals and goals in a number of her writings, such as "Occultism and the Occult Arts" and in shorter articles. The trials and dangers confronting those who aspire to tread the path of Occultism are clearly set forth, and one may be sure that she did so in order to deter all who do not have within themselves the elements of success in these matters. And we have no reason to take issue with any of her warnings.

It seems nonetheless that we should not overlook the other side of the coin. In the words related to us by G. de Purucker, "I am a servant of the servants of the Law," we have a hint of the immense joy of service; a joy that is not fleeting, but grows with the progress of the student who attains to some awareness of his place at the heart of the work to which he is dedicated. Why the warnings then? Well, we can draw many lessons from Nature, and for this one, we might turn to astronomy.

At the present time much interest has

been aroused by the discovery of rings around the planet Uranus, similar to Saturn's. This is held to be one of the most important discoveries of the century, and it seems that the existence of rings associated with any planet will provide a lesson which might be applied to the matter in hand.

Why do we observe rings associated with Saturn, and now Uranus? Here is one explanation as given by modern astronomy.

Every heavenly body has a gravitational field. In the case of our own moon, its gravitational field is about one sixth that of the Earth. This is because the Moon is only one sixth as massive as is the Earth. The Moon, at a distance of approximately 240,000 miles, is likewise affected by the Earth's gravitational field, just as we are affected by the moon's gravitation. Hence we have the tides. At the distance of the Moon from the Earth, our gravitation is far greater than is the pull of the Moon. If it were not so, things would be very different on our planet from what they are today. It has been calculated that at the time when the Earth was young, the moon was much closer to us, so close in fact, that the tides rose to a height of a mile instead of a few feet as they do today! It is equally true that the Moon feels the gravitational pull of the Earth, but to a less degree than the strength of its own gravitational field.

Now, there is a critical distance between any planet and its satellite known as the Roche Limit. At this distance, the gravitation on the satellite would be equalled by the gravitational pull of the planet, and if the satellite were to come any closer matters would become very serious indeed. The greater pull of the planet's

gravitation could tear the moon apart. It is believed by some astronomers that this is what happened in the cases of three of Saturn's moons. They were so close to the planet that they broke into small pieces which continued to orbit the planet in the form of rings.

Now, what has all of this to do with the subject at hand? For the sake of clarifying our thinking, we might say that each of us has his "Roche Limit." In the case of our problems with living, this would be the point at which our own vitality and endurance are in danger of being overcome by life's pressures. We can avoid being crushed by stopping short of our own individual "Roche Limit," and keep ourselves from being swept off our feet by taking a more relaxed attitude of mind, knowing that when we have done our best, even though we fall short of our goals, we need the time to pause and reflect. We cannot change the world; we can only change ourselves; since the world is made up of individuals with their own karmic destinies, it changes very slowly.

Turning now to the more specific subject of this article, in the treading of the path of genuine Occultism, each student has his own "Roche Limit" as it were. And in this case, we are not referring to gravitational fields, obviously. We are now speaking of spirituality. The path of Occultism cannot be disassociated from those who exemplify it in their own lives and work. Their existence is no secret. We have only to study *The Mahatma Letters* in order to come to some understanding of the Hierarchy of Compassion. Since the very nature of this Hierarchy is spirituality to a vastly greater degree than is exemplified in any individual student, any of us has his own "Roche Limit." As we are in our present state of inner development, we could not tolerate the full force of the spiritual energy that we would inevitably feel were we to come too close to the real heart of the work that is being accomplished. Such close proximity might well disrupt our psychological

natures, and none of the Teachers would allow this to happen. If it seems that we are kept at a distance, regardless of our aspirations, we may rest assured that it is for our own protection.

However, let us not think that we have been abandoned. Far from it. Each one receives all the light that he can safely use. Fortunately, this "Roche Limit" is not a fixed irrevocable thing. It changes with our growth, and it is only ourselves who set up a seeming barrier. Actually there is really none, and in the final analysis, it is all a matter of growth. This comes about in its own time, and is fostered by our own dedication to the high principles that have been so amply given to us. Only work in the Cause that we love will hasten the growth of those spiritual qualities that we have already in potency, and in time the "Roche Limit" will disappear altogether.

It would appear then that undue striving is not the answer. We have no reason to worry about it. As we learn to give of our best, we discover that these things are not so remote as we had thought. The spiritual life is with us always, and as we grow, we find new opportunities for service. And that is all that matters.

—*Theosophia*, Fall, 1977.

An Occultist does not feel "himself tied to the Karma of all his fellow-men," no more than one man feels his legs motionless because of the paralysis of another man's legs. But this does not prevent the fact that the legs of both are evolved from, and contain the same ultimate essence of the ONE LIFE. Therefore, there can be no *egotistical* feeling in his labours for the less favoured brother. Esoterically, there is no other way, *means* or *method* of sacrificing oneself "to the eternal" than by working and sacrificing oneself for the collective spirit of Life, embodied in, and (for us) represented in its highest divine aspect by Humanity alone.

—*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, XI, 469

NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

I regret to report the death of Muriel Mitchell in Hamilton on October 14. She had been in extremely ill-health for some time. Muriel had been a member of the Society for over ten years, and for the last several years had served as Secretary of the Hamilton Lodge. A Theosophical funeral service was conducted by Lodge members Laura Baldwin, Sally Lakin and Helen Mottashed.

News of the death of Laurence D. Cunningham on January 6, 1978, reached us just as the magazine went to press. He was in his 87th year. A member of the Toronto Lodge since 1931, Mr. Cunningham was one of the group of faithful members who for many years have kept the beacon light of Theosophy shining in the Niagara Peninsula. A portion of his funeral service, held at the Unitarian Church in St. Catharines, was conducted by Mr. Fleet Berry, President of Toronto Lodge.

To the families and friends of Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Cunningham, we send our sincere sympathy.

* * *

A meeting of the Board of Directors of The Theosophical Society in Canada was held in Toronto on December 13. It was attended by Fleet Berry, Wolfgang Schmitt, Joan Sutcliffe and myself. The agenda consisted of routine matters only, and this gave us the opportunity for a discussion of various matters of Theosophical interest.

My presence at the meeting was in considerable doubt until just before it was scheduled to commence. First, the previous week I had been summoned to attend a jury panel, but in the event was not selected for duty — which might well have tied me up for some time past the day of the meeting. Then, when in Ottawa on business on the morning of the 13th, the weather was such that it seemed quite possible my flight

to Toronto would be cancelled. Fortunately, it was only delayed.

* * *

Henry Summerfield, AE's biographer, whose book *That Myriad-Minded Man* is the subject of an extensive commentary by Ernest Wilks in this issue, is Associate Professor of English at the University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia.

Admirers of AE will be pleased to learn that an edition of his Collected Works is planned. Prof. Summerfield is the General Editor. In the preface to the biography he states that "separate volumes will be allotted to the poetical, literary prose, political and economic, mystical, and editorial writings."

* * *

Other interesting news on books streams in from various Theosophical publishers.

T.P.H. has brought out an advance printing of Boris de Zirkoff's historical introduction to the new T.P.H. two-volume edition of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is reviewed in this issue.

Point Loma Publications, Inc., announces a new edition of Prof. Emmett A. Greenwalt's history of the Point Loma Theosophical Community in California. It will bear a new title: *California Utopia: Point Loma, 1897-1942*. I well remember being impressed with the Point Loma story and with Dr. Greenwalt's scholarship and objectivity when reading the first edition twenty or more years ago, and am eagerly looking forward to this revised version.

The 1977-78 catalog of the Theosophical University Press announces the reissue of *Theosophy: The Path of the Mystic*, by Katherine Tingley. An earlier edition of this book inspired an article by Jenno in the Mar-Apr 1977 issue of the C.T. The Press is also offering a new facsimile edition of *The Secret Doctrine*: this no doubt indicates the growing demand by serious students for the original versions of Madame Blavatsky's works.

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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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Richard Robb, who in the last few years has developed the impressive Secret Doctrine Reference Series (Wizards Bookshelf), reports progress with the publishing of *Surya Siddhanta*, "the oldest astronomical treatise in the world."

* * *

Two students are seeking the following books: *Hindu Psychology*, by Swami Akhilananda; and *The Voice of Isis*, by

F.H. Curtiss. If any readers have these books, and are willing to part with them, will they please drop me a line?

* * *

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

Golden Rule Lodge. Patrick G. Bradley,
Richard W. McLeod.

T.G.D.

A NEW T.S. SERVICE IN WESTERN CANADA

Members and readers in Western Canada requiring T.S. books and literature are invited to write to:

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If you are a subscriber or a member-at-large and are planning to change your address, please send us a change of address card as soon as possible. If you are a member of a Lodge, please advise your Lodge Secretary so that the information may be passed to us. Second class mail is not addressed by the post office.—Eds.

Desire nothing. Chafe not at Karma, nor at Nature's changeless laws. But struggle only with the personal, the transitory, the evanescent and the perishable.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

TORONTO LODGE

A new and progressing phase in the life of Toronto Lodge has been of occurrence this winter: our activities are running in close proximity to other organizations, a practice which necessitates the cultivation of mutual consideration but as well offers the enjoyment of mutual benefits. In addition to our Theosophical programs, our rooms are being used for the twice-monthly lecture meetings of the Vedanta Society; and alternating meetings of the Guelph School of Mystical Studies, which is involved in a deep study of the Upanishads.

During this whole winter period our building is also being shared fully by the Church of the Messiah, the congregation of which having lost their own property through fire, need temporary quarters. Until recently, there was also an arrangement with the Savaka group for space to hold a class in Tibetan Buddhism. All these associations are harmonious, and in extending accommodation the Lodge also extends its field of service.

Our close connection with the Vedanta Society has led on occasion to a shared program between Vedantists and Theosophists. This has been highlighted in a series of lectures on the *Bhagavad-Gita*, given by a highly motivated Vedantic scholar. His approach to understanding the *Gita* delves beyond intellectual study of the philosophy to the essence that concerns and teaches of the spiritual man. Our Theosophical students have found it of interest to meet the Vedanta expression of the Ancient Wisdom, which is akin to Theosophy. H.P.B. often quoted Vedantic teachings to draw examples in *The Secret Doctrine*. For a few Hindu and Sanskrit students among the Vedantists, these occasions have been a first introduction to Theosophy, and they have taken some Theosophical literature for reading, such as Dudley Barr's *Theosophy, An Attitude Toward Life*.

An important part of this winter's

activities at Toronto Lodge have been classes to encourage study. Four are in operation at present. One small group of newcomers to Theosophy have been meeting regularly and as a united band for a good while, reading *The Key to Theosophy* and discussing basic Theosophical questions. Another class is using *Isis Unveiled* as a focus for study, and is delving deeply, using indexes and other literature to penetrate beyond the mental into the spiritual heart of the teachings. This group has dedicated the occasional evening to planning a seminar program for the Lodge, and has worked as a true team, in which the members inspire one another.

In pursuing the wisdom of our Second Object, the Toronto Theosophical Society is looking forward shortly to welcoming a member of the Zoroastrian Society, who will be introducing the religious and philosophical doctrines of Zoroaster in a seminar. If members will study in advance something of what H.P.B. has written concerning the esotericism in the teachings of the ancient fire philosophers, there might develop some far-reaching discussion, opening doors to further learning on both sides.

—Joan Sutcliffe
Secretary

VICTORIA LODGE

Following the completion of a two-and-a-half year study of *The Key to Theosophy*, Victoria Lodge closed its 1977 season on December 13. On that date members and regular visitors each brought to the meeting a reading or short talk about the spiritual values which they would wish to give to the world if they were able. Such diverse qualities as Wisdom, Forgiveness, Courage and Sincerity were some of the topics; others included the sacred meaning of the Winter Solstice, and the gift of Theosophy brought to the world by H.P.B.

Informal music was provided and everyone joined in singing a few carols before refreshments were served.

On January 10, 1978, Victoria Lodge reopens with two meetings. One of these will begin the Introductory Course on Theosophy for enquirers; while the Lodge will also study in depth Krishna Prem's *Initiation Into Yoga*. It is hoped to continue these two studies every week until the end of June.

Dorita Gilmour
Secretary

CALGARY LODGE

Part of the regular Thursday evening meetings in December was given over to presentations of individual projects by some of the members. Jean Ross spoke on the development and practice of new techniques to help brain damage sufferers; Hank van Hees illustrated the principal geological periods covered in our studies, and mentioned recent theories which might account for some of the upheavals recorded in Atlantean mythology; Laetitia van Hees spoke on the importance of the holy Mount Kailas and Mount Meru in ancient religions.

On Sunday afternoon, December 18, a joint meeting with members of the Lotus Lodge was held at the home of Mrs. Hilda Pawson. Some of those present had driven many miles in wintry weather to attend the meeting. We all participated in an interesting discussion of the exoteric and esoteric meanings of Christmas. Afterwards, Mrs. Pawson served a delightful Christmas tea during which the members of the two Lodges chatted and got to know one another better.

Calgary Lodge is planning a public meeting on January 19 at the newly restored Memorial Park Library. It is intended to invite the general public to a discussion on the topic "Myth, Magic and Mystery".

ORPHEUS LODGE

Members of the Orpheus Lodge wish to advise that in future its meetings will be held on Monday afternoons starting at 1:30 p.m.

Planning a camping holiday in Western Canada next Summer? Mr. and Mrs. H. van Hees, members of Calgary Lodge, cordially invite Canadian and American members and their families to use their acreage at "Hazy Hills". This is located in peaceful, wooded farm country in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, about 90 kilometres northwest of Calgary.

Interested campers should write to the van Hees at P.O. Box 14, Water Valley, Alberta, T0M 2E0.

NOTICE TO READERS

It has been brought to our attention that printed material other than this magazine has been delivered to subscribers in *The Canadian Theosophist* envelopes.

If other readers have had similar experiences, we would appreciate being informed and, if possible, provided with samples of the other publications received in this manner so that we can take up the matter with the postal authorities.

—Editors

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

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REINCARNATION AND THE PERSONALITY

TED G. DAVY

Discussions on reincarnation usually focus on the long evolutionary cycles of the higher Ego. That which reincarnates is naturally of more interest and significance than the vehicles it uses during its embodied phases. Yet the nature of the vehicle, i.e., the physical body, together with its associated personality should not be dismissed as being of no importance in the scheme of reincarnation. Properly understood, it provides a deeper perspective in which to study the mysteries of evolution both spiritual and physical.

In one popular misconception of reincarnation, it is taken for granted that it is the personality which is the reincarnating entity. That this is impossible should be obvious if only on the basis of the personality's dependence on the physical body for its existence. When the life of the body is extinguished, therefore, the remainder of what has constituted the personality is deprived of the only environment through which it can properly exist.

According to the teachings of Theosophy, none of the human principles that are involved with the make-up of the personality survive much longer than that of the physical body itself. Once the life force is removed, the corpse begins the process of disintegration; likewise, the model body, or astral counterpart of the physical, dissipates more or less quickly; eventually, that part which dwells largely in *kama loka* — the realm of desire — at length also fades away.

The existence of any one body-personality is, moreover, relative to the longer cycle of its occupant, the reincarnating entity. As has been suggested, however, it is an essential factor in the development of this entity.

Furthermore, there is a thread linking the successive personalities used by the Ego.

Although this discussion is not concerned with the reincarnating entity as such, it might be well at this point to define it. H.P. Blavatsky has described it as

“The Spiritual thinking Ego, the permanent principle in man, or that which is the seat of *Manas*.”

—*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 121.

The vehicle used by this entity, what we rather loosely call the personality, is less easily described. It is like mercury, very difficult to contain. No wonder generations of psychologists have been hard put to delineate the human personality in meaningful terms. Perhaps only in the philosophy of Buddhism has this subject ever been dealt with objectively, and in a way that it can be correlated with the process of reincarnation.

“The average person considers his psycho-physical states or the empirical being as the Self. No one in the entire history of human thought has analysed this conception in such great detail, unmasked its irrationality with such vigorous logic, and torn it to shreds with such devastating arguments as the great Buddha.”

—Jaideva Singh, “Three Important Problems of Buddhist Philosophy”, in *The Theosophist*, July, 1975.

To a very large degree the Buddhist theories of personality are compatible with the Theosophic scheme. In both are postulated five constituents that go to make up the personality. These constituent elements are called, in Sanskrit, *skandhas* (in Pali, *khandas*).

“What appears to us a unified being or thing is broken up into five

heaps or clusters. Thus personality or self becomes a mere conglomeration of five diverse constituents plus a label. As 'constellation' is a name given to a group of stars, all separate, so our 'personality' is a conventional grouping together of the five groups called the *skandhas*."

—R.N. Kak, "Consciousness in Buddhism", in *The Aryan Path*, September, 1967.

Familiarity with the properties of *skandhas*, then, should assist our understanding of that part of the mystery of human nature we call the personality. What exactly is a *skandha*?

"Literally, Skandha means 'aggregate' or 'bundle'. Philosophically the Skandhas are the groups of manifested attributes of character, such as bodily form, sensations, perceptions, and physical, mental and moral tendencies, which together form the finite parts of any being."

—Judith Tyberg, *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion*, p. 38.

There are said to be five exoteric *skandhas*, and these are enumerated in several places in our literature. One definition that is fairly well known, because quoted in *The Key to Theosophy*, reads as follows:

"*Rupa*, material qualities; *Vedana*, sensation; *Sanna*, abstract ideas; *Samkhara*, tendencies of mind; *Vinnana*, mental powers, or consciousness. Of these we are formed; by them we are conscious of existence; and through them communicate with the world about us."

—H. S. Olcott, *The Buddhist Catechism*, p. 76

From a Theosophical point of view, that is personality in a nutshell.

This is not the place for a technical discussion of *skandhas*. Those interested are referred to a valuable exposition of this

subject in *The Divine Plan*, pp. 416 - 421 by Geoffrey A. Barboroka.

It can be seen at a glance, however, that the five *skandhas* range from the physical, through various mental conditions, to consciousness.

During the period in which a human soul is incarnated in a physical body, these attributes are, of course, associated with the appropriate human principles.

"(Desires and passions) . . . are a portion of the *skandhas* . . . which are the aggregates that make up the man. The body includes one set of the *skandhas*, the astral man another, the *kama* principle is another set, and still others pertain to other parts. In *kama* are the really active and important ones which control rebirths and lead to all the varieties of life and circumstance upon each rebirth. They are being made from day to day under the law that every thought combines instantly with one of the elemental forces of nature, becoming to that extent an entity which will endure in accordance with the thought as it leaves the brain, and all of these are inseparably connected with the being who evolved them. . ."

—William Q. Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 102.

Seen in this context, the personality is far more complex than usually considered. But its very complexity provides lots of food for thought. It is obviously not a unity, and is certainly not permanent. These negations can themselves be liberating thoughts, indicating as they do the pointlessness of our trying to identify ourselves with the personality.

It is also important to note that the *skandhas* do not exist in isolation from each other. In this regard it might be helpful to keep in mind the idea suggested by the terms "aggregate", "bundle", "heap" and "cluster" in connection with the attributes.

"Other English phrases may be

suggested, such as 'thought deposits,' 'tendency seeds,' or again 'impulse seeds'. These also convey ideas associated with the term Skandhas."

—Geoffrey A. Barborka, *The Divine Plan*, p. 416.

The other important term to keep in mind is "attribute", and it is noted that the word "tendency" is frequently used as a synonym for this term.

Then again we have to consider that each of the *skandhas* are capable of division into many categories. An added complication that the composition of the "bundles" are probably seldom static for long. No doubt this accounts for the minor personality changes we undergo even over relatively short periods.

So the "bundle" of skandhas changes gradually but continually from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Then what? it is as difficult to conceive of these attributes being annihilated on the death of an old body as it is to imagine them being created anew at the birth of a new one. For by observation, each newly born human evidently comes into the world with its own "bundle" of tendencies. Where did they originate?

Bearing in mind the economy and consistency with which nature operates, it should come as no surprise that there is some connection between the vehicles used by a reincarnating Ego in successive incarnations. This connection must therefore be an important aspect of our evolution. It may be surmised that the process, obviously unconscious in all but very advanced beings, is one of the latent human powers that must be developed individually.

This possibility of a link between two different bodies and their associated personalities, existing perhaps many hundreds of years apart, should not be dismissed out of hand. Those who accept the idea of reincarnation and karma are probably receptive to it, and indeed might welcome it as a piece in the jigsaw of

human existence. It is logical, and explains much about our personalities which is not satisfactorily explainable in terms of physiology and psychology.

We know little about the process of transfer, but are given to understand that it is closely linked with the *skandhas*:

"After allowing the Soul, escaped from the pangs of personal life, a sufficient, aye, a hundredfold compensation, Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the Ego re-emerges to assume a new incarnation."

—H.P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 141

"Skandhas therefore create those casual vibrations which attract the Reincarnating Ego back to Earth-life; and as the Ego returns from the higher worlds it gathers up its Skandhas or 'impulse seeds' and they are awakened once more into activity and build the new personality of the Reincarnating Ego."

—Judith Tyberg, *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion*, pp. 38-9.

The implications of the "transfer" should give pause for reflection. *If in fact it does take place, then we as individuals are the principal architects in the design of the body and personality which it will be our karma to inhabit in our next incarnation.* The process of design is going on all the time, based on our thoughts and particularly on our desires. Conscious or deliberate design can begin whenever the individual is ready; no doubt this is one aspect of the Theosophic maxim that spiritual evolution is by "self-induced and self-devised efforts" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 17)

Notwithstanding the contribution of the parents' genes in the formation of a new body, the theory of *skandhas* indicates that the tendencies of one life — thoughts, desires, habits, even how one looks after one's body — are going to be a major factor

in the composition and nature of the next "vehicle".

"The 'old being' is the sole parent — father and mother at once — of the 'new being'. It is the former who is the creator and fashioner, of the latter, in reality; and far more so in plain truth, than any father in flesh. And once that you have well mastered the meaning of *Skandhas*, you will see what I mean."

—*The Mahatma Letters to A.P.*

Sinnett, p. 111

Tantalizingly, this subject is only sketchily detailed in Theosophical literature, and much is left to the student's speculation. However, such an exercise is very useful. Through it, the complexities of the personality are really brought home.

Let us consider just one speculative example, and think about an individual's musical attributes. Starting at a strictly physical level, the *Rupa skandhas* would determine, among other things, the facility with which a musical instrument can be played; the *Vedana skandha* would probably regulate, to some extent, the degree of sensitivity to sounds and vibrations; *Sanna* must be quite significant, since much music has an abstract quality; finally, the other mental attributes would include, it is assumed, a receptivity to higher ideals which are necessary to give meaning to a combination of notes however physically harmonious they might be. So, selecting samples from the very large number of permutations of these *skandhas*, the results might include a Mozartian genius, or a musical ignoramus; a competent instrumentalist with no feeling for music, or a music lover who with years of training could hardly play two consecutive notes properly.

Another student has suggested a thoughtful analogy in connection with the *skandhas*:

"Let us suppose a man has started on a journey. As long as he is alive he may return from the place at

which he finds himself and retrace his steps. If he runs he will by that extra effort do the return journey more quickly, but the distance to be covered is the same while the element of time would be less. If he dies before completing the return he will at least have established a tendency in that direction, or a *skandha*, as it is called in the East, and the tendency may be set up even at the eleventh hour and would await the ego's return to earth life again with whatever power or effort he endowed it.

"I believe a correct interpretation of the Second Commandment, '...for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments,' would show that these *skandhas* or thought forms, if of a high spiritual value will exist for many incarnations, while if of lower animal nature they would exhaust themselves in three or four. It is by building up these thought forms to such an extent that actions on the physical plane become godlike and superhuman instead of human or merely animal."

—George I. Kinman, "Christ Born In Us", in *The Canadian Theosophist*, December, 1937.

The aspirant on the Path of the Higher Wisdom is faced with the requirement to develop a psycho-mental state which is receptive to illumination from the manasic, or noetic plane. To put it another way, one's consciousness has to be raised to the level of universal mind. No easy task, this, especially when for the most part it has to be done in competition with the demands of daily living. For most, this development is a slow process, which, in fact, requires many incarnations to achieve. But the

skandhas present a means by which to accelerate that development, if we use them deliberately to influence the nature and quality of our future bodies and

personalities.

It is in our power to ensure that the next "vehicle" is the best possible one for the journey.

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* give any further information in regard to the Gandharvas other than this statement:

"...beings who like the Yakshas, Gandharvas, Kinaras, taken in their individualities, inhabit the astral plane..." (S.D. II, 90; III, 99 6-vol. ed.; II, 94-5 3rd ed.)

Answer. As is the case with many of the myths and legends of the Hindu deities, the full account about them is not stated in *The Secret Doctrine*. One reason may be mentioned: there is an exoteric as well as an esoteric version, and the latter is not usually imparted. To give an example: the Yakshas and Asuras are Daimons (deific beings), but they are more often portrayed as demons in the exoteric scriptures. Nevertheless, there are further references in connection with the Gandharvas which will be presented following an explanation in regard to the Yakshas and Kinaras.

In the Upanishads the Yakshas are regarded as supernatural beings. In the Puranas they are stated to be a class of semi-divine beings associated with Kubera, the god of riches and represented as the regent of the northern quarter. As for the Kinaras, in later scriptures they are regarded as beings associated with the Gandharvas and they too are celebrated as celestial musicians.

In the *Rig-Veda*, which is the first and most important of the four Vedas, only one Gandharva is mentioned and his habitation

is the sky. It is in the later scriptures that the Gandharvas are portrayed as heavenly musicians. In fact, a quotation may be presented in connection with the Gandharva of the *Rig-Veda*:

"Yet, while the *Gandharva* of the *Rig-Veda* may there be made to personify the fire of the Sun, the *Gandharva devas* are entities both of a physical and psychic character; while the *Apsarases* (with other *Rudras*) are both *qualities* and *quantities*. In short, if ever unravelled, the theogony of the Vedic Gods will reveal fathomless mysteries of Creation and being." (S.D. II, 585; IV, 157 6-vol. ed.; II, 619 3rd ed.)

The *Apsarases* are portrayed as undines or water-nymphs from the Paradise or Heaven of Indra. The *Rudras* are represented as the sons of Rudra — the god of the tempests.

"In Esoteric Philosophy, the *Rudras* (*Kumaras*, *Adityas*, *Gandharvas*, *Asuras*, etc.) are the highest *Dhyan-Chohans* or *Devas* as regards intellectuality. They are those who, owing to their having acquired by self-development the *five-fold* nature — hence the sacredness of number *five* — became independent of the pure *Arupa devas*. This is a mystery very difficult to realize and understand

correctly. For, we see that those who were 'obedient to law' are, equally with the *rebels, doomed to be reborn in every age.*" (S.D. II, 585; IV, 157 6-vol. ed.; II, 619 3rd ed.)

Three more classes of deities are associated with the Gandharvas and are now defined. Kumaras — this Sanskrit word literally signifies Youths, hence designated Holy Youths. In *The Secret Doctrine* they are defined as one of the classes of the Solar Pitris who provided direct assistance to humanity during the period of the Third Root-Race. Adityas — in the *Rig-Veda* the name of seven deities of the heavenly sphere, the chief of whom is Varuna, the supreme deity, king of both gods and men and the presiding deity of the day, as Mitra was the presiding deity of the night. The Adityas were regarded as being distinct from the *visve devas*, i.e., all the gods collectively. Asuras — a term with a dual meaning: in the Vedas it signifies divine spirits, and the term is applied to the three classes of Solar Pitris: the Kumaras, the Agnishvattas, and the Manasaputras. But in the later exoteric literature the Asuras are regarded as demons. The Sanskrit word is also defined in two ways: *asura* derived from *asu* — breath; *a-sura* — composed of *a* — not, *sura* — a god: consequently a demon.

Here is another reference to the Gandharvas; and mention is made of the one who is regarded as a leader of the Gandharvas:

"Narada is the leader of the *Gandharvas*, the celestial singers and musicians; *esoterically*, the reason for it is explained by the fact that the latter (*the Gandharvas*) are 'the instructors of men in the secret sciences.' It is they, who 'loving the women of the Earth', disclosed to them the mysteries of creation; or, as in the Veda — the 'heavenly Gandharva' is a deity who knew and revealed the *secrets of heaven and divine truths*, in general. If we

remember what is said of this class of Angels in Enoch and in the Bible, then the allegory is plain: their leader, Narada, while refusing to procreate, leads men to become gods. Moreover, all of these, as stated in the Vedas, are *Chhandaja* (will-born) or incarnated (in different *Manvantaras*) *of their own will*; and they are shown in exoteric literature as existing age after age; some being 'cursed to be re-born,' others, incarnating as a duty." (S.D. II, 584; IV, 156 6-vol. ed.; II, 618 3rd ed.)

Reference is now made to the Gandharva in the *Rig-Veda*:

"The Gandharva of the Veda is the deity who knows and reveals the secrets of heaven and divine truths to mortals. *Cosmically* — the Gandharvas are the aggregate powers of the solar-fire, and constitute its Forces; *psychically* — the intelligence residing in the *Sushumna*, Solar ray, the highest of the seven rays; *mystically* — the occult force in the Soma (the moon, or lunar plant) and the drink made of it; *physically* — the phenomenal, and spiritually — the noumenal causes of *Sound* and the 'Voice of Nature.' Hence they are called the 6,333 'heavenly Singers' and musicians of Indra's loka who personify (even in number) the various and manifold sounds in Nature, both above and below. In the latter allegories they are said to have mystic power over women, and *to be fond of them*. The esoteric meaning is plain. They are one of the forms, if not the prototypes, of Enoch's angels, the Sons of God, who saw that the daughters of men were fair (*Genesis*, vi, 2.), who married them, and taught the daughters of the Earth the *secrets of Heaven*." (S.D. I, 523; II, 247 6-vol. ed.; I, 569 3rd ed.)

BOOK REVIEWS

Music Forms, by Geoffrey Hodson. Published 1976 by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar. xiv + 35 pp. Price \$12.00.

This unique book, with its beautiful illustrations, includes work by Geoffrey Hodson, well-known writer on Theosophical subjects, in collaboration with the late Dr. Gordon Kingsley, musician, to discover the different effects produced by the sound of music upon the matter of the superphysical worlds. There is also a section written by the late scientist-artist Dr. Hans Jenny, concerning the effects of vibrations transmitted to physical substances.

The surveys of the investigations of the two authors are presented in the one book to suggest possible comparisons and to create interest, rather than to claim exact similarity in the researches.

Dr. Jenny's "The Sculpture of Vibrations" is a study in a new field which he calls Cymatics. It concerns "patterns of a world permeated by rhythm" and "music made visible in a film of liquid". There are illustrations of the patterns formed by quartz sand strewn on a steel plate excited by vibrations from a crystal oscillator; the fascinating patterns resulting from liquid in vibration as well as the sound of a bar of Mozart's music made visible by impressing the sound vibration patterns on a film of liquid.

Dr. Jenny has expressed the belief that his experiments in the field of Cymatics will give insight into the world of vibrations — terrestrial and extra-terrestrial — and eventually will serve fields of research as diverse as astrophysics and biology

Geoffrey Hodson devotes a chapter to "The Faculty of Clairvoyance — some Theosophical Concepts"; and a chapter to "Cymatics Physical and Superphysical". The major part of his contribution is on the subject, "A Clairvoyant Study of Music".

Mr. Hodson listened first to a succession of single notes and later to such well-known classics as Handel's "Largo", Haydn's

"Emperor Hymn" and Wagner's "Overture to Parsifal". He then described what he saw clairvoyantly and their effects upon the matter of the superphysical worlds. These were then transformed into coloured illustrations by several artists.

A list of books on the subject of the existence of superphysical substance and extra-sensory perception is provided.

This book is highly recommended to all those interested in new scientific research, in occult science, extra-sensory perception, in music and painting; and, of course, to those who realize there are undeveloped powers latent in man.

—Beth Cooil

* * *

Rebirth of the Occult Tradition. How The Secret Doctrine of H.P. Blavatsky was Written, by Boris de Zirkoff. Published 1977 by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India. 78 pp.

This is an advance printing of the historical introduction to the forthcoming new T.P.H. two-volume edition of H.P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. In this form the introduction will be welcomed by the large number of students of Theosophy who already possess a copy of the S.D., and who otherwise would not have access to this important document.

With his customary attention to detail and accuracy, Boris de Zirkoff brings together from many sources all that is known about the actual writing and early publishing history of the S.D. It is a fascinating narrative. Even though it unavoidably leaves several questions unanswered, this compilation is none the less valuable as a comprehensive reference to one of the most important events in theosophical history.

The description of the evolution of *The Secret Doctrine* is an instructive lesson in itself. "How it was written" begs the question "Who wrote it?" All the available clues are here.

One of the unanswered questions concerns the whereabouts of the missing

third and subsequent volumes of the S.D. This problem is covered exhaustively, with even *The Canadian Theosophist* providing some of the references. This subject is a deep mystery which over the years has prompted a wide variety of speculation. Obviously, however, the mystery is not likely to be solved now, and time spent in speculation might be better applied to studying the two volumes that are at hand.

Another thought-provoking matter is the handling of the text during the printing of *The Secret Doctrine*. At the time, money was scarce, yet no expense was spared in getting everything exactly as H.P.B. wanted it. Page proofs were altered with no

more concern than if they had been but early drafts. Consequently, the printer's bill for last-minute changes was unusually large — "more than the original cost of setting up" (p. 43).

That portion of the "occult tradition" which saw light of day in *The Secret Doctrine* has now been available to students of the Ancient Wisdom for nearly ninety years. Mr. de Zirkoff's introduction indicates the stupendous effort and personal sacrifices that went into H.P. Blavatsky's great work, and if nothing else points up the great debt owed by those of her readers who have benefitted from it.

—Ted G. Davy

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