

# THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

KATHERINE TINGLEY, EDITOR

VOL. XXVI, NO. 4

APRIL 1924

“WHEN you have decided that a thing ought to be done and are doing it, never avoid being seen doing it, though the many shall form an unfavorable opinion about it. For if it is not right to do it, avoid doing the thing; but if it is right, why are you afraid of those who shall find fault wrongly?”—EPICETUS, *Manual*: Translated by George Long

## “SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION”

## “SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION”

H. T. EDGE, M. A.



HE work of H. P. Blavatsky initiated a new era of thought, whose characteristics become daily more manifest in the utterances of the foremost exponents of public thought and opinion.

In an article on ‘Spiritual Evolution,’ by Edmond Holmes, in the January *Hibbert Journal*, we find admirably expressed many ideas for which

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

Theosophists have been contending since the initiation of their first Leader's work.

The writer begins by posing the question between monism and dualism; and, when confronted by the query whether the universe is One or Two, answers that it is both One and Two. The world is a process: it is One in respect of its own being; Two in respect of its whence and whither. We remark that this suggests the symbol of three points placed in the form of a triangle. At the apex is a unit; at the base a duality. But the antithesis between the unit and the duality constitutes another duality; and altogether six different dualities and three different units can be found in this simple but pregnant symbol. So true is it that, for every single step we advance, broad new prospects open before us. So true is it that mathematical symbolism directs our thoughts and defines the structure of the universe.

He then speaks of the law of Contradiction as being superseded by that of Polar Opposition. This latter he regards as the supreme law of thought. And certainly there is an essential quality of the reasoning mind which compels it, while seeking unity, always to arrive at the Dilemma. It is at this point that most inquirers give up in despair, scoff at human reason, or resort to blind faith. If they could but realize that this is just the point where they are in danger of tumbling over some truth! Was it not Éliphas Lévi who said that equilibrium results from the analogy of contraries? Antitheses are not mutually exclusive contradictions; they are correlatives.

The writer exposes the old-fashioned way of separating the universe and life into two discrete elements, one material and the other spiritual; of first dividing the universe into God and the world, and then proceeding to invent means of relation and intercommunication between the two. They are essentially one, though this one may be regarded under different aspects. Matter he would define as "what is ultimate in the analysis, the world of our experience"; and Spirit as "what is ultimate in the synthesis"; the two corresponding respectively to the Whence and the Whither.

He inveighs against the idea of a static universe, wherein man, after spending a single life in one state, passes abruptly and forever to another. The universe is always moving; it is a process.

"The religion in which man presents to himself ascent towards the spiritual pole of existence as the ideal end of his being, may perhaps be spoken of as the *Gospel of Spiritual Evolution*."

Asking what place there is for God in such a universe, he replies

## “SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION”

that there is the most exalted of places -- the place which is at once central and supreme.

“I believe in God because I believe in man.”

God is not separate from his universe; it is a grave error --

“To take all that our highest experiences have suggested to us of beauty, of goodness, of reality, of power, of glory, to gather these together and throw them outside the world, and personify them and call them *God*; and, having done this, to limit the meaning of the words *universe* and *nature* to what is left behind when these quintessential qualities have gone.”

God is the ultimate reality in Nature. The writer anticipates the charge of pantheism, but shows that whether his views are pantheistic or not depends on how the word *pantheism* is used; and in either case the charge is nugatory. See *The Key to Theosophy*, chapter v:

“**INQ.** This is the old, old claim of Pantheism. If you are Pantheists, you cannot be Deists; and if you are not Deists, then you have to answer to the name of Atheists.

“**THEO.** Not necessarily so. The term ‘Pantheism’ is, again, one of the many abused terms, whose real and primitive meaning has been distorted by blind prejudice and a one-sidedness of view. If you accept the Christian etymology of this compound word, and form it of *pan* (πᾶν), ‘all,’ and *theos* (θεός), ‘god,’ and then imagine and teach that this means that every stone and every tree in Nature is a God, or the ONE God, then, of course, you will be right, and make of Pantheists fetish-worshippers, in addition to their legitimate name. But you will hardly be as successful if you etymologize the word ‘Pantheism’ esoterically, and as we do.”

And then H. P. Blavatsky explains this true definition. This is just what the writer says when he quotes a definition of pantheism in the derogatory sense.

As to the idea of a personal God, we find the following:

“Father Hunter tells us that ‘the pantheistic God who is identical with the world, cannot have personal attributes such as intellect and will.’ Why can he not?”

And, showing that man is on one side a self-conscious spirit and on the other side a complex organism, he applies the analogy to the universe.

“If what is, on one side of it, a microcosm, is on another side a self-conscious spirit, may it not be that what is, on one side of it, the macrocosm, is on another side of it a Spirit, which is as much higher in the level and wider in the range of its life than the human spirit, as is the macrocosm than the microcosm, the body of the Universe than the body of man?”

As to a personal God he says that —

“One who so thinks of the Universe and of God will hesitate to apply the word *personal* to God, but only because he feels that God is super-personal -- personal after a manner and in a degree which defy expression and even baffle imaginative thought.”

Students of Theosophy will remember what is said in *The Key to Theosophy* on this point. When we speak of personality, we ordinarily imply certain human limitations which cannot be predicated of Deity without belittling that conception to absurdity. On the other hand, to

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

say that God is not personal in this narrow sense, does not mean that we reduce Deity to a mere abstraction or blind cosmic force. Those who argue thus have set up one of those false antitheses against which Theosophists and the writer are contending.

Another important point in the article is made when the writer emphasizes the necessity for *practice* and *action*, rather than argument, as the road to wisdom. If we would know man's relation to Deity, we must work out the solution in our own spiritual evolution. He gives an official religious definition of faith, which is belief in a supernatural revelation, a belief made possible by the grace of the supernatural God; and, where any constituted body claims to be an intermediary between God and man, this definition of faith seems to amount to a trusting belief in what you are told to believe. But the writer describes faith as "a spontaneous overflow from the depths of man's spiritual life," not needing authoritative inculcation or official definition.

Salvation is here defined as the escape not from damnation but from *self*, or rather, from the *lesser self*; escape by aspiring towards the greater or real Self. Hence, though the desire for salvation is selfish, when salvation merely means one's individual escape from damnation and achievement of bliss, this desire is not selfish when it means the escape from selfishness itself. Man does not escape perdition by a sudden transition or act of grace; but he avoids the path that leads downward and that contracts, by ever expanding towards the ideal of the greater Self.

"Yes, man can make or mar himself. The choice is given him of living for self or living for God — in other words, of living for the actual or for the ideal self."

"The way to God is the way of self-transcendence through self-development, the way of liberation from bondage to self."

He points out that many people prefer mental repose to truth, and hence are always seeking for some finality or certitude; wherein is implied a quality of laziness and a tendency to cling to 'fundamentals.' But "the lover of truth will have to teach himself, at whatever cost, to find repose in mental unrest." This of course does not mean that we must be anxious or wobbly, but that we must never allow ourselves to stagnate in a false notion of finality; we must be always expanding.

In considering the application of his idea of spiritual evolution to a solution of social problems, the writer shows that this idea provides a remedy for individual selfishness by setting up the unity of the cosmos, and our own individual sharing therein, as an incentive to harmony. Each must be loyal to the greater Self, wherein he shares.

At the end of his article he says:

"I am very sure that it has taken many lives to make me what I am; and I am very sure

## RONDEL

that it will take many more lives — perhaps an infinity of lives — to make me whatever I am destined to become.”

Thus we have touched upon a few of the points in this article, leaving others necessarily undealt with. A powerful keynote has been struck; but a great array of topics of course have had to be omitted. In the working out of this principle, these would come up for consideration; and this is the daily experience of those who are working to apply Theosophical principles to every department of actual life. In the field of intellectual inquiry, too, such questions as biological evolution, the ancestry of man, the law of cycles in history, the function of science, and many others, would call for special treatment. The entire field to be covered by such a program as that of Theosophy is immense. One of its functions, that of influencing the progress of thought, has certainly achieved considerable success, as the evidence of current opinion shows.

## RONDEL

### “THE YEAR HATH PUT HIS MANTLE BY”

KENNETH MORRIS

From the French of Charles D’Orleans (1391-1465)

THE year hath put his mantle by  
Of snow, and icy wind, and rain;  
And hath bedecked himself amain  
In sunshine brightness blithesomely.  
There is no beast, or bird to fly,  
But in his jargon crieth plain: —  
“The year hath put his mantle by  
Of snow, and icy wind, and rain.”

And all the waters ’neath the sky,  
That dumb or dark so long have lain,  
Their springtime livery wear again  
Of silver drops and jewelry.  
The year hath put his mantle by  
Of snow, and icy wind, and rain.

*International Theosophical Headquarters,  
Point Loma, California*

## LABORARE EST ORARE

RALPH LANESDALE

O labor is to pray. This epigram, like so many of its kind, is very convincing to those who think that way, and is rank heresy to the devout; while to the mystic it will perhaps seem somewhat of a juggling with words of uncertain meaning. And as to the philosopher, I imagine he would describe it as an attempt to conceal a confusion of mind as to the purpose and true function of both labor and prayer.

But then the philosopher is an intellectualist; and neither labor nor prayer are likely to be congenial to his disposition. The Taoist, the most spiritual of all philosophers, who seeks the realization of union with the Supreme or Universal Consciousness, looks upon all efforts in that direction as futile. The Path is there at your feet; the more you seek it the less likely will you be to find it. It must reveal itself, and then you will be wholly aware of the heart of Tao. Let me quote an English poem by Kenneth Morris from the Chinese that expresses this attitude of unwatchful waiting crowned by triumphant surprise.

“There where the brook comes down in a white cascade,  
From the gloom of the pines above to the mountain glade,  
Suddenly I was aware of the heart of Tao.

I was making a poem — simple thoughts enow,  
And choosing the simplest words — and then, somehow,  
There where the brook comes down in a white cascade,

At the sound of a lute blown down through the pinetrees' shade,  
The spirit within me thrilled and leaped and swayed,  
And suddenly I was aware of the heart of Tao.

First there was one came, bent, and the sweat on his brow,  
Bearing a load, 'twixt low-hung bough and bough,  
There where the brook comes down in a white cascade;

And then, that One unseen in the wood, who played;  
And then, this one that heard, in the woodland strayed,  
Was suddenly wholly aware of the heart of Tao.

But suppose I had only striven and searched and prayed,  
And not gone forth where my fancy took me — how  
Should I so have suddenly come on the heart of Tao,  
There where the brook comes down in a white cascade?”

— *SSu-K'ung-T'u*: done into English by K. V. Morris,  
THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH, October, 1918

But is this philosophy? Is it not rather faith glorified by realization?

## LABORARE EST ORARE

Faith is so often spoken of as sufficient unto itself, that realization would come almost as a disaster; for the two (as generally understood) would seem incompatible. I feel sure that to very many people faith is a kind of substitute for a realization that is considered impossible in this life: and to such devout minds the thought of realization would appear profane. The beauty of faith is due to the remoteness of its object. Assuredly, faith has no place in an intellectual philosophy: yet though philosophers are too often sophists, or merely intellectual, there is not anything in the word to exclude spirituality; and it seems that pure faith may have its place in philosophy although entirely alien to intellectualism.

The Taoist, I imagine, would say: Labor, by all means, if you think it necessary or useful; it can do no harm, unless you become absorbed in it; then you will be blind, and deaf, and unable to recognise Tao. So too if you pray, your whole attention will be held by that to which you pray, and you will have no power to see the path that lies before you. Not so can Tao be realized.

Prayer may mean many things to different minds, and yet there is one assumption implied in the mental attitude of prayer that distinguishes it from the mystical adoration of the Spiritual Soul of the Universe as surely as from the attitude of patient waiting of the Taoist. It is the assumption of an actual separation existing between the devotee and the object of his devotion. There is a suggestion at least of inferiority in the supplicant, who does not aspire to union with the All, but who invokes a higher power to mediate between the humble devotee and the Supreme, from whom some benediction is expected, or some favor is implored. Of course a devotee may rise to a purely mystical condition of aspiration or of adoration that may raise him above the attitude of supplication; but then he will have passed beyond prayer and have attained to meditation in the mystic sense.

So too a laborer may do his work so impersonally that his soul will be freed from the fetters of mind and body and he may in the midst of his labor find the path open at his feet and see the glory of the spiritual life revealed in a moment of illumination. But it was not the work that opened the closed door, it simply occupied the mind impersonally and so set the soul free. What followed was the revelation unexplainable, not to be reproduced at will by any method known to man. How many thousands of devotees have wasted their lives in fruitless prayer, for the vision that may have come unasked to one who simply loved the beautiful in nature, or in art, in the teeming world of men, or in the regions of imagination? And how many millions wear away their strength in ceaseless toil with no rewarding flash of spiritual illumination? Labor

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

alone has no power to awake the soul, though it may dull the bodily senses and stupefy the mind. I speak of labor that is laborious, and not the mere indulgence of the desire to create, which in itself is a joy and not a labor. The word 'labor' carries with it the idea of compulsory or obligatory toil, not voluntary activity, however strenuous. Labor in its highest aspect may be regarded as a sacrifice; and sacrifice indeed is intimately associated with prayer, as a means of pacifying angry deities, or of enlisting them in some enterprise to give the suppliant an advantage over other competitors.

An agricultural community might well declare that labor on the soil was as valuable (to the crop) as prayers to the gods. One can imagine that the wise men of the state might see that sacrifices to the gods were more profitable to the priests than to the land from which the people drew their sustenance, and they might well protest against the laziness that would try to make prayers a substitute for labor. They might have reason in saying "To labor is to pray," doubting perhaps the very existence of the gods, or honestly believing that they were best served by labor in the field. Such a belief would have experience in its favor. And yet the farmer knows that he also has to reckon with the unforeseen and uncontrollable excesses of the elements; and if he made sacrifices to the gods presiding over those elements he would not dare to hope that they would in return do his work for him. The gods were uncertain quantities, and prayers might be unfruitful. So that it was wise to put good work into the farm and hope the gods would accept it as a sacrifice, if after all they actually existed. Yes, surely, that was a wise saying: "Laborare est orare."

But I cannot imagine that it would be accepted as true by any religious mind: for religion is essentially mystical. That is to say it places worship first: and the worship must be tribute paid to spiritual powers, to gods or to a God, who are not as men, and who are superior to Nature. Of course there are innumerable varieties of religion and of gods. But all agree in placing the particular deity worshiped above all other gods, when the existence of other gods is admitted. So that the object of religious worship is neither nature nor man. The homage paid to a human lord is seldom confused with the worship that constitutes a religion: though not infrequently human heroes have been proclaimed as gods. But it is reasonable to doubt the sincerity of such attempts at apotheosis. I fancy that the deification of human rulers in their own lifetime has seldom been taken quite seriously by those concerned. So that their worship cannot be looked upon as really religious.

Most religions give a prominent place to sacrifice in some or other form, not necessarily involving bloodshed: and, generally speaking, the

## LABORARE EST ORARE

offerings have been the fruits of labor, but, as the one who made the sacrifice and who looked for the reward was not necessarily the laborer whose work produced the sacrificial object, it is reasonable to suppose that the religious value of the ceremony was in the mind of the votary who hoped for divine recognition in return for his devotion.

Therefore it seems as if the declaration of the identity of labor with prayer could only come from one who had either a mystical conception of labor or a distinct skepticism as to the value of prayer.

There is indeed a possibility that the saying originated in a truly philosophical conception that both labor and prayer were means to an end, the end aimed at being the achievement of a purpose, or the gratification of a desire, while prayer was regarded as a means of mental concentration capable of accomplishing the desired result without labor; just as the materialist would look upon labor as sufficient without the aid of prayer. There is also a possibility of a religionist being so spiritually minded as to look upon prayer as communion with the Divine, and labor as co-operation with the Creator in his work of guiding the evolution of the universe. Such an idealist might say that to labor is to pray: but he would probably incur the reproach of his coreligionists. Such an interpretation would be too Theosophical.

To make this old saying true, the laborer must work not only willingly but devotionally; and to do that he must be imbued with the Theosophical ideal of Universal Brotherhood. He must feel that his work is a labor of love for the service of his family, regarding all men as his brothers. He must be in a position to feel that his labor is a gift to the world, and not as a sacrifice from which he hopes to get some reward. The only reward of such service is the right to serve as a brother for the benefit of all, the brotherhood being universal. The laborer must know that there is in him the same divine essence as in all the rest of the great family, and that to him may come the consciousness of his Divinity, as surely as to the most devout religionist who seeks communion with his God in prayer.

When prayer has ceased to be a supplication, a soliciting of favors, it may become an aspiration, an uprising from the limitations of the personal idea to a conception of union with the Divine; it may approach that mystical condition spoken of sometimes as meditation, which precedes the attainment of union with the Supreme — or Tao. And so it seems to me that in some such mystical and devotional interpretation of two simple words it may be true for us to say *Laborare est orare*.

## SINCERITY

TALBOT MUNDY

**M**OST of us pride ourselves on being sincere and reasonable. Modern systems of government are based on a theory that reasonable men and women shall elect their representatives, who, after reasoning out the issues of the day, shall reach decisions reasonably applicable for the common good. Nothing more annoys an individual than to be told he is unreasonable and insincere. International irritation is the invariable consequence whenever one nation's press and politicians charge the government of another nation with adopting an unreasonable attitude. Criticism that a creed or dogma is unreasonable induces frenzy and such rawly irreligious bickering as recently has broken out between the self-styled Fundamentalists and so-called Modernists. And we pride ourselves that our irritation is due to our sincerity.

Just how sincere and reasonable really are we? Man, catalogued by the scientists as *homo sapiens*, concedes himself to be the crowning glory of creation because his reason is developed, whereas, it is asserted, animals have only instinct and — it is again asserted — flowers, sun, moon, stars, and the imponderable universe have no intelligence whatever. But can this egoistic claim by *homo sapiens* be supported by evidence, in the light of the very reasonableness, which he asserts is his own exclusive attribute?

Will this vaunted reasonableness bear sincere scrutiny? How much of our thinking and our conduct of ourselves and our affairs is due to what in animals we arrogantly term 'blind instinct'; how much is due to what in nature we term 'blind forces'? And just how open-eyed and open-minded are we ourselves, as compared to the nations, sections of society, animals, vegetables, minerals, and unknown stars, which we regard as 'inferior' because devoid of that ability to reason of which we boast?

“COME NOW AND LET US REASON TOGETHER”

Webster's dictionary defines reason as “the power or faculty of comprehending and inferring.” What is it that we comprehend? What is it we infer? Where are we, as a consequence? And whither is the process leading us? The question requires to be faced.

Do we reason from cause to effect? Do we comprehend causes at all? Or do we infer imaginary causes, and try to justify the inference by seeking, from a thousand different motives, to manipulate the effects of our

## SINCERITY

wrong thinking? In the event that the latter should appear to be true, are we brave enough, and sufficiently reasonable, to reverse our mental processes and to face the issue? And if we refuse to face the issue, in what way are we superior to 'the beasts that perish' or to the vegetables, which we and the animals eat?

It is true that we can kill the animals. But they can also kill us. It is true, we have invented methods for butchering hecatombs of beasts, which place the beasts at a considerable disadvantage and appear to make it improbable at the moment that the beasts will ever gain the ascendancy. But it is also true that organized hosts of creatures, so small individually as to be almost, if not quite invisible under the most powerful microscope, can kill us with much more deadly certainty than we can massacre, say, elephants or rabbits. Consider the microbe.

We can, and we do kill one another; and we do it with more ingenuity, more cruelty, and more hypocrisy than can by any stretch of the imagination be charged against the animals to which we claim to be superior. We try to exterminate some animals on account of their alleged ferocity; but if their ferocity is bad, is not ours worse? Therefore, if they should be destroyed, should we not also be destroyed? It would appear, judging from the news in the sensational newspapers, that all humanity is surging forward to destruction; and although we do not like to believe that, but prefer to solace ourselves with the delusion that our particular nation, our particular political system, ourself and our circle of friends are immune from what we see, more or less clearly, to be impending on the 'inferior' peoples of the earth, it would likely do us no harm to consider wherein our alleged safety lies, and whether the causes that we are agreed endanger others are not also at the root of our own thinking.

It is fashionable nowadays to denounce as a 'knocker' everyone who discerns and dares to mention faults in the conduct of private, local, or national affairs, and the imputation is that all such individuals belong to the undesirable class of selfishly carping critics who loathe to see prosperity in other people. Alternatively, whoever cheers noisily for conditions as they are is called a 'booster,' and is supposed to belong to that respectable class of honest citizens who always loyally fulfil their obligations and on whom prosperity depends.

But that fashion is not new. The system of labeling oneself and one's opponents, with the absurd notion of monopolizing all the credit and assuming none of the responsibility, and with the criminal intention of masking one's own selfishness, while attributing ill-faith to one's opponents, is as old as savagery. The fact that these labels, religious as well as political, are as often as not chosen for the purpose of self-deception makes no important difference; it is just as criminal to deceive oneself as

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

to deceive others, because self-deception is the underlying cause of all crime.

No one would commit any crime whatever, unless he were first self-deceived; the inevitable outcome would be too obvious. Unless first self-deceived, we could never be deceived by others, nor could we ever be induced to practise deception. We all know this. The very children know it. The first principle of banking, and of every other successful business, is to be on guard ceaselessly against self-deception, and the great majority of failures are attributed to lack of judgment, which is only another name for the same thing.

### THE SIN OF INSINCERITY

There are two outstanding peculiarities of human nature, which anyone can recognise who dares to examine his own thought processes; but although we like to pride ourselves on daring, we are seldom prone to it when we ourselves are to be the objects of experiment. The two peculiarities are these: that we always seek to transfer the blame for any sort of evil consequences, from ourselves to others; and that we will accept any makeshift, any harbor of refuge, rather than be radical, admit that our philosophy is wrong, and face the issue bravely reasonable. We pretend to, and to some extent we do hate insincerity (as for instance when we think we recognise it in the arguments and acts of others); but it remains the king-pin, so to speak, of our own and of all the world's calamities. Until we learn to be sincere, there is no hope whatever of relief from distress, whether individual or national. And the process must begin at home. We can never be sincere with others until we are first wholly sincere with ourselves.

It is an indisputable axiom, discernible in every circumstance of nature, that like begets like. In Bible-phraseology, we cannot gather figs from thistles or obtain both sweet and bitter water from the same spring. Nevertheless, we pretend to try to abolish crime by hanging criminals; we seek to abolish pain by permitting vivisection; we pretend to aspire to peace, while openly boasting of our preparations for 'the next war'; we prohibit alcoholic drink and censor plays, books, motion pictures, but insist that our newspapers shall print sensational reports of every abominable crime. In law we hold each individual responsible for his own acts, unless it can be proved he is out of his mind, in which case we lock him up and make ourselves responsible for him; yet we seek 'salvation' through 'vicarious atonement,' and try to substitute a 'profession of faith' for downright honesty, as a solution of the mystery of life after death.

These are only a few of our more obvious absurdities; anyone who

## SINCERITY

cares to look about him frankly can discover countless others for himself. They are all due to our besetting sin of insincerity, which is the armor of ignorance.

The process of insincerity is easily illustrated, and the arguments by which it propagates itself will occur to everyone the moment the illustration is given. Consider the question of international rivalry and what has happened recently in that connexion. Weary of a sort of warfare that exhausted all the combatants and left none with a perceptible advantage, the rival governments sent representatives to a conference, at which it was agreed to limit the more costly and 'out-of-date' engines of destruction. There has been a great deal of mutual suspicion since then, as to whether the governments who agreed to the contract have loyally obeyed its terms; but there is absolutely no question that every government concerned is working day and night to supply itself with cheaper and much more deadly means of making war!

That is no secret. It is openly discussed in the newspapers; and there are very few newspapers that do not urge their own government to assume the lead in deadly preparation. The excuse is, that unless *this* government is fully prepared to do wholesale murder on a scale never before dreamed of, *that* government will take the initiative and will seize the upper hand by means of ruthless butchery.

### 'XENOPHOBIA'

A nice new label has been made for this comparatively ancient form of international mistrust. But Xenophobia is nothing but another mask for insincerity — another way of deceiving ourselves and imputing the blame either to others or to a psychology over which we are supposed to have no control. It would be amusing, if it were not so disastrous, stupid, and yet simple of solution. The apparent helplessness of individuals takes all the humor from the situation. The individual who feels inclined to sneer would do better to remember that the acts and methods of governments are no more than a large-scale illustration of the workings of the human mind, his own included.

From the pulpits of a million churches the command is thundered: "Love ye one another!" There lies the solution certainly. But without sincerity it is impossible to love.

### DUALITY

We are all afraid. Our lower nature, which persists in every one of us (or we should be invisible to mortal eyes and functioning on vastly higher

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

planes of being) dreads its own destruction and deceives us -- even the best of us -- with arguments of ever-increasing subtily, of which a favorite one is that we should be at the mercy of the lower nature of others unless ready at all times to use dishonest methods for our own defense. But the truth is that the only absolute protection against treachery is honesty. The slightest compromise with dishonesty provides an opening through which the darkest forces surge and gain control of us. It is not the other man's dishonesty, but our own that endangers us as individuals. In other words, if we admit one trace of insincerity into our reasoning the effect is similar to that of poison introduced into a well; it does not poison one part of the water, but all of it; and the more colorless and unnoticeable it is, the more deadly the results.

It is not possible to exaggerate the inevitable consequences of continuing in insincerity; because the lower nature of every human being is capable of limitless evil and, if left to its own resources, is totally incapable of anything but evil. The lower nature of nations is a multiplication of the lower nature of individuals in the mass. It is what the churches call the devil. It possesses a sort of intelligence, which amounts to a keenly alert instinct of self-preservation combined with mercurial subtily. It knows no more of the higher nature than a stagnant pond knows of the sun that sterilizes it. And it is no more useful as a foundation on which to raise a spiritual edifice than a desert-mirage would be as a source of drinking water. Every concession to the lower nature is of the nature of a bargain with a heartless, conscienceless, 'blind force,' and is of the very essence of insincerity.

### WHAT THEN IS INSINCERITY?

The common mistake is to regard sincerity as an emotion. Glimpsed through the mist of that mistake, it would appear to be the consequence of action, a variable product subject to the judgment of opinion, possessing qualities that differ in degree with individuals. Accepting that fallacy, we find ourselves at a loss for a word with which to define that stark, uncompromising habit of watchful self-analysis, which alone insures right activity.

It is customary (perhaps because we like to be respectful) to speak of the sincerity of politicians, churchmen, and (undoubtedly because of a desire for self-respect) particularly of ourselves. And yet, in whichever direction we look, we see in our own actions, and in the acts of others, the unquestionable effects of insincerity. A world-wide plebiscite for or against the Golden Rule would certainly produce an overwhelming, and possibly unanimous, vote in favor of it, but the vote would be perfectly

## SINCERITY

insincere, and its only possible result would be a temporary smug self-righteousness and a delusion that the world was better than it is. Ignorance knows nothing of sincerity; and sincerity can not be attained by protesting allegiance to a creed, whose tenets are obscure and incomprehensible.

Sincerity is impossible without knowledge. We must understand what we profess before there can be the remotest chance of putting the profession into practise. And it is surely obvious that we must understand ourselves before we can hope to understand others or be qualified to criticize them.

The occult, that is to say the concealed, inmost, meaning of sincerity is Self-knowledge. It is the only guide to right action. To wait for sincerity in others before striving to attain it in oneself would be as useless as to wait for the harvest without troubling to plant the seed. The Millennium will come when we have learned sincerity. We shall find it within ourselves - or nowhere.

### THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS SIMPLIFIED

The world's problems appear intricate and overwhelming. The more they are studied, the more impossible it seems that any of the plans for their solution can provide relief. It is beginning to dawn on business men, and even on the legislatures, that no nation, and no individual can live unto himself alone but that a disaster to one section of humanity is sure to be felt eventually in the remotest corners of the earth. But the converse of that is equally true, and is immensely more important to consider, because on it depends the redemption of the human race.

Improvement in any one individual must eventually benefit the whole world. Therein lies the solution of the whole difficulty, extremely simple, yet, in common with all simple things, prodigiously more difficult to do than may appear at first sight. Sincerity must be the watchword, or the effort is waste. Sincerity, which knows no thought of compromise, insists that the sole motive for self-improvement shall be that others may be the beneficiaries; and that is the exact opposite of all of the methods of self-improvement that the world indorses.

The Ancient Wisdom, which is the Mother of all religions, teaches that man is the microcosm of the macrocosm, and we can prove this for ourselves, if we only examine ourselves fearlessly. Within our own consciousness we may discern every one of the motives that govern and misgovern all mankind. As individuals we have no resources and no virtues that are denied to other men; we are immune from none of the temptations that waylay others; we have the same destiny, whether or not we recognise it, the same broad duty to our fellow-men, the same Law

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

for our guidance. And the only way in which we can obey the Law is by applying it in every instance to ourselves.

Our lower nature is incapable of comprehending, and consequently utterly incapable of obeying, the Higher Law. Our Higher Nature knows the Law. Which of the two is to govern us, which is to direct our thinking and the acts that are the outcome of our thinking, is the only real problem we are called on to decide.

### WHAT ARE WE?

We are. Each one of us knows that, if nothing else. In phraseology that is epochs older than the Bible that is commonly supposed to be its origin, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Very few are in agreement, even for five minutes at a time, as to the extremely recent past; and human memory is silent as to what preceded our birth into this particular existence.

We are; and we are now. Now, and our own consciousness, are the limits within which we function. Now, is the immeasurable point where past and future meet. Our consciousness is the immeasurable point at which the Higher and the lower nature meet. The only important difference between us and the animals is, that while the whole universe, ourselves and the animals included, is subject to the law of evolution, we, as human beings, have reached the stage of self-direction. We are no longer 'at the mercy' of what the scientists prefer to call 'blind forces,' but have the privilege of controlling our own individual destiny by the exercise of will. We may choose, that is, between the Higher and the lower. We may control and discipline our lower selves, or we may let our lower selves continue to deceive us. In either event we shall receive the full, logical, exactly just, inevitable consequences of our choice.

In other words, our consciousness — that of which we are conscious — will continue to be better or to grow worse in exact proportion to our effort to be governed by the Higher Law, by recognising it, or our submission to the dictates of the lower nature. The problem is individual in every instance.

### THE SUBTILTY OF INSINCERITY

Our lower nature is dependable in one, and in only one respect: it is invariably a deceiver. Never, in any circumstances, does it tell the truth; because it does not, and cannot, know the truth. It presents expediency in the disguise of principle and, when that fails, it flatters us with the suggestion that we are making sacrifices when we forego personal

## SINCERITY

advantage for the universal good. It is obvious at once to anyone who communes with his Higher nature even for a moment, that the universal good inevitably must include each individual, not excepting him who makes the 'sacrifice'; it becomes at once obvious that the only sacrifice that could entail the slightest, even momentary disadvantage would be to let go the Higher for the sake of the lower, foregoing the universal for the sake of the personal. But the ridiculous delusion of self-sacrifice persists and propagates the subtlest forms of vanity.

Another favorite method of the lower nature is to frighten or to flatter us with the belief that we must struggle terribly in an incessant warfare before the Higher Nature can prevail. But the Higher Nature knows absolutely nothing of any struggle. The illustration is at hand, in nature. The moment the light appears, the darkness disappears; there is no struggle between them. In the bright light of the Higher Nature the darkness of the lower vanishes; but as long as one prefers the lower there will be a struggle to cling to it, and the dawning of the Light into the consciousness will hurt.

### SINCERITY AND SELF-ANALYSIS

The delusion of struggle is due to insincerity in the attempt at self-analysis. It means that one of the subtlest forms of personality is masquerading as a virtue. A sense of humor is the readiest solvent of that obscure condition, since whoever can laugh at himself is in a fair way to become impersonal. He is likely to discern that he has been struggling to benefit his personality by posing as a student of the Higher Law; whereas the first axiom of the Higher Law is that no degree of selfishness can possibly be beneficial, and that the only way in which we can really benefit ourselves is by first benefiting others.

Sincerity insists that the sole purpose of self-directed evolution, its only motive, and its constant care shall be, so to discipline, govern, and improve ourselves as individuals that we may be, not only not a handicap to the rest of humanity, but an assistance to it by becoming fit to bear at least our full share of the load. That is the law of Universal Brotherhood. Recognition of the Law — confession to oneself that the law exists — is the first step. Sincerity soon follows; and the first stage of sincerity appears when we find ourselves, even while continuing a certain course, admitting to ourselves that the course is wrong, instead of deceiving ourselves that it is right. In the second stage we discontinue doing what we know is wrong, for the simple reason that by injuring our own character we are committing a sin against our fellow-man. In the third stage we

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

see clearly what the right course is, and from that moment we become a positive force for good.

We are our brother's keeper; but, like the sentinel on duty at the gate, we keep him by guarding ourselves against the enemy — our lower nature.

### DUALITY AND REINCARNATION

All the great teachers of whom there is any record have laid down the law that we must purify ourselves before we may hope to help others. Jesus of Nazareth is quoted as saying: "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye"; and that, with characteristic human insincerity, has come to be accepted as authentic doctrine by a civilization whose foremost characteristic is delight in condemnation of its neighbor while continuing its own self-indulgence in immorality.

But the reason is not far to seek. The two essential facts — Duality and Reincarnation — have been overlooked. The 'three-score years and ten' that statisticians and a prophet have assured us is about the limit of a human life, have so circumscribed our view that the task of raising the general standard of morality appears hopeless, if not useless. The old Latin proverb *Cui Bono* — in colloquial modern English, 'What's the use?' — must occur in some form or another to every man who assumes that he was 'born in sin,' lives for something less than a hundred years, dies, and 'that's the end of it.'

Reincarnation instantly changes the aspect of things and events. The moment we realize that no effort can possibly be lost, that no thought and no deed can remain uncompensated, that full and perfect justice is unavoidable, and that we return into the world again, and again, and again, to meet exactly the conditions that our former efforts have deserved, we begin to discern the purpose and the joy of evolution and to take our part in it with a sincerity that has no use for self-pity and laughs at adversity as an experience whose sublime and encouraging purpose is that we may learn from it self-mastery — the Key of Life eternal.



"If you can have a high motive in life, carry it above all selfishness, all worldliness, out into the sweet pure air of human effort, you can find a trust superb; something that will stand by you through all your experiences."

— *Katherine Tingley*

## A TRUE CONSERVATISM

H. TRAVERS, M. A.

E often find a false antithesis made between progress and retrogression; and people divided into two camps of reform and conservatism. Some point to the license which is indulged in in modern fiction; and others rejoin that we cannot go back to the prim morality of a bygone age.

But the clue to this question is that, while continual change and fluctuation rule in human affairs, there are certain fundamental principles that can never change. This is a logical consequence of the fact that human nature remains fundamentally the same through the ages; hence the same basic laws and conditions apply to human nature in all ages.

One such unchanging law is that man must be master of himself. On this depends his happiness and prosperity. The necessity of working for our own well-being is independent of all theories and gospels: here we are, and we must make the best of it.

It is not possible for man to ignore the basic laws of his nature; the attempt to do so brings disaster, and he is thus forced back again to the consideration of these laws. And man's nature is both spiritual and material; so that both these facts must be recognised.

In an animal, the instincts and desires are all balanced; he has no self-reflective mind and power of choice to upset the balance of his faculties. He is normal and healthy, or else he simply dies. A child may approximate to such a state, because he is taken care of by others. But a man is responsible; he has a mind; and that mind must either be under the control of his higher nature, or it will become the sport of his lower nature.

The one thing for man, then, is self-control; the rules for which are the same now as always. Man needs it now more than ever, because the rapid development of inventions and complexities in his material life exposes him to greater difficulties and dangers.

A recent discovery has brought us a ray of light from ancient Egypt, a land where the essential laws of human nature were once understood and followed. Not all the flippancy of current comment can keep us from feeling a thrill – the response of our inner perceptions to this powerful appeal made to them; the momentary awakening of latent memories that live eternally in the imperishable foundations of human nature. Majestic statues and the sublime aspect of that Sphinx that has endured through the ages, make us feel that there have been times in the world's history when a higher ideal of human nature was realized; and inspire us with the glad conviction that it can be realized still.

A true conservatism means loyalty to the eternal foundations of

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

human character. There is nobody but feels within himself that man is something far greater than the creature of wants and fears, of doubts and despondencies, of aimlessness and futility, which appears on the surface. We are all deeply religious in our hearts. The fact that we are one with the infinite and the eternal is borne in upon us in our silent moments. But our attention and our forces are wasted on the external concerns of life, and we miss the opportunities for realizing something of that greatness that lies within.

The discoveries which science makes tend rather to increase and multiply the forces with which we must contend, than to enhance our power of self-mastery. This remark of course does not mean that scientific research should be discouraged; but it does mean that the more we discover, the more our responsibility is increased and the more need have we of self-control. A recent article in an influential newspaper defended science against a charge of failing to prevent abuses, by declaring that this is not the function of science: that science discovers things, but does not profess to prevent men from misusing them. If this is the case, our argument for the need of greater self-knowledge and self-control is borne out.

In fact there is no condition of society which can dispense with the simple old-fashioned rules of self-control, economy, order, obedience, etc., taught to children in their earliest years. While there may be certain ideas and methods of upbringing that change with changing fashions, it is certainly true that the essential principles of morality and right conduct do not vary. These principles are founded on existing facts — the constitution of human nature and the laws of the universe.

It needs to be said often that the important things are very simple, and are overlooked because of their very simplicity. The really vital things are often dismissed as unworthy of notice. Little faults of temper, though they may be as small as the microbe of influenza, are not insignificant on that account. On the contrary, the law holds good that small beginnings are more important than anything that follows them. And so it comes about that people fail at the large things which they undertake; and fail because they have first failed at the small beginnings.

We can profit by maxims of the greatest antiquity, which are good current coin for today, because they deal with unchanging conditions in human nature and are true for all time. People may claim license for their personal desires (which they call by some lofty name), under the impression that they are vindicating liberty and independence. But ancient wisdom teaches that true self-expression does not mean the assertion of personal desires, however magnificent these may seem, but the assertion of our *emancipation from such desires, the expression of our Individuality.*

# THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

BANDUSIA WAKEFIELD

ARGUMENTS IN ITS FAVOR BROUGHT TOGETHER AND SOME  
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

 HE term *reincarnation*, as used in Theosophical literature, means the coming again and again of the human soul into successive human bodies of flesh, but *never* into the body of a lower animal.

In evolution the door always closes behind the eternal pilgrim, and, for this informing and indwelling principle, there is no going back. Its progress is like the flow of the blood through the heart. Valves open for the forward flow of the life-current in its cycle, but close against a backward flow. Or it is like that of the chambered nautilus that builds itself new mansions as the old ones grow too small, and never goes back; in fact, cannot, for the old house is outgrown. So when once a center of self-consciousness has been evolved from the Universal Consciousness, and has incarnated in a fit vehicle for its use, the human body, it can never enter the body of a lower animal or function through its organism.

Reimbodiment, or change of form, is a method of progress in the involution and evolution of the whole cosmos, but reimbodiment of collective life in forms below the human is succeeded by reincarnation of individual thinking entities when the human stage is reached.

We see evidence of design in all nature, a working towards an end, and in this working a cyclic law obtains, alternate periods of subjective and objective life. We see it clearly in the vegetable kingdom. The tree drops its old garment of leaves, the life principle withdraws to the root and dwells in subjectivity till the period of reawakening, when it comes forth again into trunk and branch and takes on a new body of leaves. Not only the leaves, but branch and stalk of other plants, die, leaving only root or bulb or seed to hold the latent life and ideal plan of the plant. But the life and the plan are there, however unmanifested, and nature never makes a mistake in re embodying the one in accordance with the other. In this kingdom a physical vehicle is not dispensed with during subjective periods, but is reduced to small limits.

Reimbodiment is plainly discernible in the insect world, where the same old material is worked over into a new and entirely different body, but always with the intervening subjective states. We have a familiar illustration of this in the caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly. Higher in

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

the scale, transformations in the same body are limited to organs, the informing principle is more developed, and it has no longer a physical body during subjective states save in hibernation, sleep, and trance.

As reïmbodiment, with alternate periods of activity and rest, obtains in the lower kingdoms, analogy would lead us to infer the same for the higher. If it is worth while to conserve the informing principle of a plant with its specific character and reïmbody it, surely the soul of man deserves as much.

The immortality of the human soul demands reïmbodiment of some kind, somewhere, and the fittest body at present is the human organism, which required so many million years for its building, and the fittest place is earth so long as earth can furnish needed experience. A beginning with the body implies an end with the body. That the soul is not the product of the body and does not necessarily perish with it is evident from its superiority over the body, as no stream can rise higher than its source.

The aim we see about us in nature is surely not set aside when we come to man, and since the soul of man incarnates, it must incarnate for a purpose, and that purpose must be the development of all the latent potentialities within it through experience by its contact with matter on the physical plane. This development includes the conquest of matter and the training of the animal man till it becomes a fit instrument for the divine, and implies also the helping of other souls in their development. This object we plainly see cannot be accomplished in one earth-life, even the longest; and how many quit the body at birth or in early childhood! If these can complete their development under other conditions than those afforded on the physical plane, then were it never necessary to incarnate at all and incarnation is a farce. But incarnation being necessary, reincarnation must be so also. To acquire wisdom there must be opportunity for all experience, and to learn the unsatisfying nature of material life it must be tested in every phase. Many, many lives on earth are necessary for this; and the desire which first brought the soul into physical life will bring it again and again until physical life has nothing more to offer that can draw the soul.

The theory of repeated earth-lives in which a reincarnating ego reaps what it has sown and sows what it will reap, is the only one consistent with the idea of justice. The great differences in mental and moral capacities of different individuals, as well as in their circumstances, can be just on no other ground than that each individual has made his own capacities and conditions. What justice is there in creating new souls without any wish, will, or action on their part for all new-born bodies, and making these souls with widely different tendencies and capacities, placing some, often weak ones, in the most wretched and vicious sur-

## THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

roundings where only strong souls could be virtuous, and others in beautiful, good, and happy homes with every incentive to virtue, and then holding all alike responsible for the outcome of their lives? There is no justice in it. Only on the theory that each soul makes for itself its character and conditions is there any justice in the existing state of things. But this theory demands pre-existence of the soul and reincarnation.

Neither is there any justice in the theory that some race in the future will reap the grand results of the experience of preceding races, unless that race be composed of the same egos as the preceding or has rendered or will render them like benefits.

The wide divergences in mental and moral characteristics in the same family can be accounted for only on the theory of a persistent ego that incarnates again and again, gathering up, assimilating, and carrying on the results of all its experiences. Heredity will not account for these differences, for even in the case of twins where not only the ancestry but the prenatal conditions are the same these wide mental and moral divergences may be seen in connexion with great physical similarity. Heredity accounts for the physical likeness and is a coworker with reincarnation by affording the ego a suitable instrument for its purposes, an instrument which the ego has earned by its past.

Reincarnation and not heredity accounts for genius and infant precocity. Often the genius is the only one in his family possessing his striking qualities in any marked degree. He neither inherited them from ancestors nor transmitted them to posterity, but must have acquired them by his own exertions in the past, and still carries them with him. To call these qualities the unearned gift of a Creator is but to ascribe partiality and injustice to that Creator.

Infant precocity shows remembrance of knowledge acquired in the past. This is true not only of Mozart, who composed a most difficult concerto at the age of four years, but of less noted persons who at a very early age were able to read without having been taught in the present life.

Some persons comprehend and accept with great readiness Theosophical teachings on first presentation, because these are not new to their egos, while others of equal intellect comprehend and accept with difficulty or not at all. We readily accept those new ideas which are only an extension of our previous ideas.

Great spiritual lights, such as Jesus and Buddha, are no products of heredity with the added acquirements of one life only; but the suffering through which those souls were perfected and made one with the divine spirit was the suffering of many lives.

Reincarnation best accounts for the decay of highly civilized races and nations and the rise of new ones. The egos that brought on the high

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

civilization of the old race quit it for the new, and then less and less advanced egos incarnate in the old, thus bringing on its decay. By the law of progress through heredity the race ought to go on to greater things instead of going back. Through reincarnation there is real and continued progress. The going-back is only apparent, for all the egos go forward, and only the race made use of as an instrument by successively less and less advanced egos, goes back. The instrument, but not the user, wears out.

Only the theory of reincarnation gives a satisfactory explanation of the extinction of races. All the egos in the present cycle of development, having progressed beyond the need of anything that a certain race can furnish, will no longer incarnate in it, but will seek a more advanced race, so births cease in the old race and it becomes extinct.

The reappearance of certain types of civilization after intervals of fifteen hundred years goes to sustain the doctrine of reincarnation of the same ego after that interval in a subjective state. As an example of this, note the reappearance of the conquering, colonizing, and empire-loving character of the Romans of the Augustan period in the English of the Elizabethan age. See also at the present time in the currents of mystic, religious, and philosophical thought a reappearance of the mystic thought, Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism, of the fourth century.

The instinctive feelings of attraction and repulsion felt on first meeting people and without any apparent reason, may be due to old relations existing in former lives and not yet severed on the invisible planes. Indeed, they are sometimes hard to account for on any other hypothesis.

Peculiar emotions connected with certain things and events point to some unknown former relationship to them.

Dreams often indicate a familiarity with persons and things not known in this life.

Intuitions of former lives enrich the page of the poet. Wordsworth says:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting  
And cometh from afar.”

The same thought in varying phrase is expressed by many other inspired poets.

That all people do not remember former lives is no proof of previous non-existence; for we do not remember the first years of our infancy nor many of the events of our later life, yet we do not on that account consider ourselves to have been non-existent. The reason so many of us do not remember is because the new brain we use in the present body is not

## THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

sufficiently sensitive to the fine vibrations of the Higher Ego to be impressed with its knowledge of the past. But when the lower nature has been sufficiently trained and purified, then each personality will be able to receive the knowledge of the past and be strong enough to bear it. But at the present stage of development, it is a blessing to most of us that we are not burdened with a memory of the details of the past, and many would be glad to forget portions of the present life could the lesson be retained without the remembrance of the mistakes that taught them. This is just what we have from our past lives.

The objection to reincarnation is sometimes offered that it is unjust to suffer for an unremembered past, or for the deeds of another personality. Those who make this objection, however, never think of injustice in reaping the happy rewards of an unremembered past, or of the deeds of another personality. They fail also to consider how many causes of suffering sown in this life are forgotten before the suffering comes, yet they do not for that reason think the suffering unjust. Through all lives the ego is the same; and each personality, though a new one, is an aggregation of qualities from the past. So the suffering is just.

Some people object to reincarnation because, as they say, they do not want to come back; they have had enough of the troubles of earth and are tired of earth-life, or they do not wish to lose their individuality or be separated from their friends or fail to recognise them. All these objections are based on the likes and dislikes of the objectors, as if these were sufficient to change facts and laws of nature. These people lose sight of the common fact in their every-day experience that their not liking things does not prevent their being. But granting the potency of likes and dislikes, one may be weary of earth-life under certain conditions and yet be eager to try it under others. In fact, it is a common thing to hear people say, "Oh, if I could only live my life over again with the knowledge I now have, how differently I would act!" This chance they sigh for, they will have.

As for losing the individuality, this is a mistake. The individuality, which includes all that is worth saving, is not lost. It is only the undesirable portion of the being that is broken up. The new personality is but a new putting together of old material which has to be worked over till something better is made of it, or till it is so refined and purified that it is worthy to be preserved.

The objection regarding the failure to recognise friends is based on externals. That these friends must continue to have the same outward appearance is entirely unreasonable, as they do not do this even through one short earth-life. Applied to the soul-plane, this objection would preclude all mental and spiritual growth. In regard to the separation of

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

friends, souls that are truly bound together by pure unselfish love are not separated by either birth or death of a body. Attachments hold over from one life to another and bring the same individuals together in successive incarnations.

Another objection put forward against reincarnation is that by presenting the opportunities of future lives it will make people careless regarding the present, that they will follow evil courses, indulging in whatever gratifies the lower nature. This might be so if there were no retribution, but every evil thought and deed carries in itself the seed of pain. The law of Karma is inseparably linked to that of Reincarnation, and there is no escaping the consequences of one's acts. This knowledge, instead of making people more inclined to lead evil lives, will have just the opposite effect.

The appearance of vicious children in virtuous families and virtuous children in vicious families is offered as an objection to the theory that the soul is drawn to reincarnate in a family having similar characteristics to his own. Other factors than this, however, enter into the account. The interlinking of past Karma may be such as to bring together in the same family very different characters. Sometimes strong souls that have a mission to help humanity may be born into low conditions from choice, for by such birth they are best enabled to help all. They are too strong and pure to be overpowered by the conditions and so rise above them. But by their lowly birth and passing up through all ranks they are enabled to come into sympathetic touch with all.

Reincarnation accounts for the divergences in families while heredity does not, although it is claimed that they may be accounted for by reversion. Yet the theory of reversion is disproved by the appearance of a single genius in an obscure family; for had any of his like appeared before in that family it would not have been obscure.

It is claimed that reincarnation sets aside heredity, or that heredity invalidates reincarnation, neither of which is true; for reincarnation works with heredity, the latter affording the suitable physical environment for the returning ego.

Increase of population is put forward as an objection to reincarnation, yet it is not positively known that the population of the earth increases, there being no statistics of population in many parts of it; and even if the population should increase there are so many more egos out of incarnation than in it that the increase could easily be accounted for without affecting the theory of reincarnation.

Reincarnation is believed in by the majority of the human race. It is the belief of Brâhmans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Sûfi Mohammedans and many of the tribes of North and South America, among them the

## THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

Mayas. It is held by some Jews and Christians and by most of the members of the Theosophical Society of whatever religion. As a theory, reincarnation is becoming less strange and unreasonable to the western mind, and it certainly best accounts for known existing facts.

This doctrine is very clearly taught in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* — which is accepted by Brâhmans,— and also in the *Upanishads*. It belongs to the ancient religious teachings of the Egyptians. The ‘Song of Resurrection’ by Isis is a song of rebirth. It is taught in the *Talmud*, the *Zohar* and *Kether Malkuth*, and in the *Old* and *New Testaments*. Micah prophesies the coming again of one whose “going-forth” had been from everlasting (v, 2).

Jesus asked his disciples: “Whom do men say that I am?” And they answered: “Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets” (*Matthew*, xvi, 13). So it was thought that any of these might come again. And the same belief on the part of his own chosen disciples is implied by the question, “Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” (*John*, ix, 2), which implies the possibility of his sinning before birth. And Jesus said nothing against such a belief in either case although he says of himself: “To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth” (*John*, xviii, 37). On the contrary, he declares that, “Before Abraham was, I am” (*John*, viii), and that John the Baptist was Elias come again (*Matthew*, xi, 14). In *Revelation* (iii, 12) is the statement: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the house of my God, and he shall go no more out”; which implies that he had been out before and would go out again unless he overcame. In *John* (iii, 13) is the passage, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven,” which teaches pre-existence unless heaven has been and is devoid of men. There are numerous other passages supporting the teaching of reincarnation to be found in the Christian Bible.

A general knowledge in the western world of the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation would be a very beneficial influence. It would greatly increase the sense of moral responsibility and consequently the moral character of the people. It would change the attitude of the rich and the poor towards each other for the better. The rich would feel themselves accountable for making the best use of their wealth, would know that if they practised injustice and unkindness in their treatment of the poor and had no sympathy for their suffering, they might expect sometime to be poor themselves and suffer like treatment to learn a needed lesson. So even from a selfish point of view there would be a strong incentive to brotherly action. A thorough assimilation of these doctrines would strike deeper root than this and would really make people less

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

selfish. On the part of the poor, these teachings would enable them to see that they themselves were the real makers of their hard lot, that they had earned it by their own past or that they had chosen it for their own soul-growth.

This knowledge would help them to bear with patience what would otherwise be revolted against as great injustice, and it would take away their hate and envy of the rich, while at the same time the rich would be more kind to them, so that a general brotherly feeling would arise. A wholesome teaching is this:

“Who toiled a slave may come anew a prince,  
For gentle worthiness and merit won;  
Who ruled a king may wander earth in rags  
For things done and undone.”

## PICTURES FROM BUITENZORG, JAVA

C. J. RYAN



BUITENZORG, the Dutch-Javanese city of Government and pleasure, is about forty miles from Batavia, the capital of Java, and stands at an elevation of more than seven hundred feet above sea-level. The climate is bracing and cool enough to make it a highly desirable refuge for Europeans who are compelled to spend the main part of their lives in the scorching days and stifling nights of Batavia. Buitenzorg has been aptly called the Simla of Java, but, unlike Simla, which is the summer-retreat for the Government of British India, it is the real seat of the Dutch Indian Government and the permanent home of the Governor-General.

The wonderful botanic garden at Buitenzorg, illustrated herewith, is one of the most famous 'sights' of Java, a land of many wonders and beauties. The following excerpt from Eliza R. Scidmore's *Java, the Garden of the East* gives an interesting impression:

“The Dutch are acknowledgedly the best of horticulturists in Europe, and with the heat of a tropical sun, a daily shower, and nearly a century's well-directed efforts, they have made Buitenzorg's garden first of its kind in the world, despite the rival efforts of the French at Saigon, and of the British at Singapore, Ceylon, Calcutta, and Jamaica. The governor-general's palace is in the middle of the ninety-acre inclosure, reached from the main gate by what is undoubtedly the finest avenue of trees in the world. These graceful kanari-trees, arching one hundred feet overhead in a great green cathedral aisle, have tall, straight trunks covered with stag-horn ferns, ratans, creeping palms, blooming orchids, and every kind of parasite and air-plant the climate

## THE LAMA'S LAW

allows; and there is a fairy-lake of lotus and *Victoria regia* beside it, with pandanus and red-stemmed *Banka* palms crowded in a great sheaf or bouquet on a tiny island. When one rides through this green avenue in the freshness of the early morning, it seems as though nature and the tropics could do no more, until he has penetrated the tunnels of waringen-trees, the open avenues of royal palms, the great plantation of a thousand palms, the grove of tree-fern, and the frangipani thicket, and has reached the knoll commanding the vaporous blue volcanic heights, from one peak of which a faint streamer of smoke perpetually floats.

“It is a tropical experience to reverse an umbrella and in a few minutes fill it with golden-hearted white frangipani blossoms, or to find nutmegs lying as thick as acorns on the ground, and break their green outer shell and see the fine coral branches of mace enveloping the dark kernel. It is delight, too, to see mangosteens and rambutans growing, to find bread, sausages, and candles hanging in plenty from benevolent trees, and other fruits and strange flowers springing from a tree's trunk instead of from its branches . . . and yet in the oval pleasance called the rose-garden one may take heart and boast of the temperate zone, since that rare exotic, the rose, is but a spindling bush, and its blossom less than scanty at Buitenzorg, when one remembers California's perennial prodigalities in showers of roses.”

## THE LAMA'S LAW

TALBOT MUNDY

O YE who look to enter in through Discipline to Bliss,  
Ye shall not stray from out the way, if ye remember this:  
Ye shall not waste a weary hour, nor hope for Hope in vain,  
If ye persist with will until self-righteousness is slain.  
If through the mist of mortal eyes, deluded, ye discern  
That ye are holier than these, ye have the whole to learn!  
If ye are tied with tangled pride because ye learn the Law,  
Know then, your purest thoughts deny the Truth ye never saw!  
If ye resent in discontent the searchlight of reproof,  
In hooded pride ye stand aside, at sin's not Soul's behoof!  
Each gain for self denies the Self that knows the self is vain.  
Who crowns accomplishment with pride must build the whole again!  
But if, at each ascending step, more clearly ye perceive  
That he must kill the lower will who would the world relieve  
And they are last who would be first, their effort thrown away;  
Be patient then, and persevere. Ye tread the Middle Way!

*International Theosophical Headquarters,  
Point Loma, California*

## THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

R. MACHELL

**T**HIS surely is a topic of general interest. There are many people who undertake to teach newcomers to this world how to make the most of it, how to beat it at its own game, how to get a larger share of its favors than falls to the lot of ordinary mortals, how to make a good show in the world, or how to accommodate themselves to its peculiarities. And this preparation for the 'battle of life' is called education. These 'educators' take it for granted that life is a battle, and all their teaching concerns the art of getting the best of every bargain, or of every opponent. Life is, to them, entirely composed of transactions in which opponents try to beat one another, either in business, play, or war. Thus, according to their philosophy of life, all men being potential antagonists must at all times be ready for a fight. And yet the world is shocked when war breaks out and civilization crumbles.

In spite of the popularity of this 'struggle for existence' theory, and the inevitability of war theory, for which all men should prepare; and even in spite of the education which teaches men to look upon their fellows as potential, if not certain, enemies, yet there is a large body of people who want peace or who would be glad to see war abolished, even while they would still continue to carry on their business along lines of cut-throat competition.

There are people who presume to think that life is not necessarily a struggle for existence, even if man has made it seem so. And therein we may see the recognition of another theory of life: the theory that this world in which we live is what we choose to make it, in so far as our own share in its life is concerned. And there are some who think that man's share in the life of the world is a big one, if not a determining factor in its character. They think that most of the wars of the world are heirlooms bequeathed to us by our ancestors, who, if not actually fighting themselves, were busy preparing those ambitions, rivalries, and hates from which wars spring eventually. Also they looked ahead and saw the necessary harvest that should come, and so to make it sure they bound their nation to some other by alliances for mutual defense or mutual assistance in predatory enterprises, so making future war a certainty.

Part of the education above alluded to attempts to root the 'struggle for existence' theory in the young minds that are being prepared to carry on the old tradition of rights that are based on power to gratify desire;

## THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

so creating the necessary condition from which wars spring. For after all war is inevitable only when those in power, be they few or many, are imbued with a conviction that war is a necessary condition of the world we live in.

Heredity is powerful no doubt; but hereditary tendencies may all be modified, or even overcome; and the acceptance of a legacy is not obligatory.

The legacy of national ambitions, national claims, national alliances for mutual aid in war, national hates, or national revenge, is bad enough; but it rests with the present generation to ratify the obligations so imposed, or to dissolve them by concession or by compromise. War is not necessary: "there is always another way" of settling a difference. One way is understanding. To see the disputed question from your opponent's point of view is a great help to understanding. To be tolerant of other people's misunderstanding is to destroy one of the causes of war. To love humanity is to paralyse the fighting-instinct: it is to recognise a higher law than the 'struggle for existence.'

To make that higher law operative in this world is to change its character. And this is what man exists for; to put right the wrongs done, and re-establish right ideals in the world, so that evolution may proceed and the 'struggle for existence' shall no longer block the upward path of human progress. There should be no struggle for existence.

It is not difficult to see that war means retrogression. Its immediate aim is general destruction, and repression. Even a war of liberation, which seems so noble, is but the first step in the establishment by force of a new power, that shall conquer and destroy some other power and acquire its territory, or reduce it to subserviency. A conquered nation rises, conquers its oppressor, re-establishes its lost power, and perhaps would like to rest on its conquest and enjoy in peace the fruits of victory. But that cannot be. War will breed war. "Hatred does not cease by hatred, but by love."

It is for us to change the world we live in. That may seem a big mouthful; but think of it in this way: ask yourself, What is the world I live in? Is it so vast? What is it other than my own thought-sphere, the sphere of my ideals and my aspirations, my loves and hates, my sympathies and antipathies, my claims, my rights, my passions and desires? The world I live in is made up of these. How often do I step outside of it, and breathe the open air of the great world in which the million millions of individual lives appear as living atoms in the body of a universe, a godlike being suffering from all the discord raging in his blood? Am I indeed a citizen of this greater world? Or am I imprisoned in my little world, my personal self, concerned with personal wants and

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

personal desires, at war with others like myself with similar desires and similar imaginary rights, that we all hope to justify by wrongs, whose consequences we all hope will somehow be miraculously transmuted into benedictions?

But the law of life is not miraculous. "That which ye sow that also shall ye reap." The world we live in is just as we have made it, we or our predecessors, who were perhaps ourselves, if the truth were known; and if the world has to be miraculously altered, it is we ourselves must work the miracle, we or our successors, who also may be ourselves. And how can it be done? Reformers have been busy in all ages and are so still, endeavoring to persuade some one else to do their job, instead of putting the reform immediately into practice. And this continual attempt to induce others to change the world we live in springs from a misunderstanding of the peculiar nature of that world and our relation to it.

The world we live in is our own thought-sphere, which is not separated from the thought-sphere of the world. All that we know about the world is just our own ideas, impressions, and experiences. In those we live. Our words and acts, yes even our thoughts, are the expression of our moods, our aspirations, our desires. They are the material with which we build, the seeds we plant; they are the soil, they are the creatures, that inhabit this world of which we are creators. And if our gardens only produce a mass of poison-weeds, whose fault is it? And if wild animals abound, may it not be that they are born from thoughts of men?

And, if we would reform the world, where had we best begin? Surely it is no use to preach reforms we have not learned to practise; for preaching is not teaching. To teach effectively we must prepare an atmosphere in which the child may grow, and the most effective teaching is example.

Reformers who try to get other people to adopt reforms which they themselves have not yet made effective in their own lives are setting an example of talking while not doing; and that is the lesson that will be learned, 'how not to do it.' And this is not a moral platitude, it is a distressing fact. It also has its lesson, which is simply that the way to change the world is just to change the only part of it within our reach, that is 'the world we live in.' Which brings us back to where we started, with the question of education.

What are the fundamental teachings that best fit a child for life? Obviously the first requisite must be a right philosophy of life: a correct theory of life, a basis for a moral code, an understanding of the purposes for which we live. Taking the last problem first, I suppose it might be said that its solution is the object of existence, entailing as it does the achievement of self-knowledge.

Assuming that self-knowledge is attainable, and seeing as we must

## THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

that all nature is evolving towards that goal, and seeing that the range of human intelligence and understanding extends in both directions beyond the limits of our ordinary mentality, as from the fact that the lowest specimens of humanity seem less than human in their ignorance and degradation, while the highest pass easily beyond the reach of even the most highly educated intellects and have to be classified as geniuses whose inspired utterances seem to place them in a category that is almost superhuman; it does not seem more than reasonable to suppose that there exist men as superior to our men of genius as they are to the most degraded savages.

Assuming further that the universe is a manifestation of universal consciousness, we must feel sure that from the lowest form of matter to the highest breath of spirit is an unbroken graduation of consciousness, appropriate to each of the innumerable interpenetrating grades of spiritual intelligence, on which is modeled the external universe with all its countless lives, in one of which grades we find ourselves.

Observing what takes place in nature and in the history of human civilization, we notice that the rudiments of science and civilization come to man from above; that is to say from the men of genius, whose 'prophetic vision' points the way that science must follow, establishing a road for the masses who come after. The theory of the cave-man evolving for himself civilization and science is not supported by observation. Nor is it reasonable. Whereas the theory that knowledge is given to man by those who know, in so far as we can speak of knowledge being given at all, is eminently reasonable and is going on all the time. True, that which is given by one to another is no more than a suggestion, an indication, a little push in the right direction, which must be taken up and worked out and converted into knowledge by experiment and experience before it can be applied to practical problems.

So the Theosophist accepts the teachings of the ancient Wisdom-Religion or Theosophy as indications, not as dogmas. One of these teachings is the perfectibility of man; not an unreasonable theory if the whole universe is in a state of evolution.

On this assumption it would be reasonable to accept the perfectibility of man as an indication of his path in life, to seek self-knowledge, to attain. And the first need of the newcomer to this world in which we live is right education, to set him securely on the path of self-knowledge. This education will warn him of the duality of his own nature, and enable him to discriminate between the impulses that, coming from below, might if unrecognised deceive him, and those spiritual impulses that enlighten the mind with flashes of inspiration, that will reveal to him the true path of evolution. He will be taught the power of his will and of

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

his creative imagination, which will enable him to make of his life a beneficent influence changing the world he lives in to a potential paradise in comparison with the hell in which so many millions drag out their existence.

And the aim of this high living must be to realize a great and greater sympathy with all that lives, expanding the world by raising the idea of Self until it loses its earthly selfishness and sees itself as a pure ray of spiritual consciousness flashed from the central Spiritual Self.

Unless this impersonality is made a living power in the mind, there will creep in the shadow of the lower self with all its pride and its ambition. Then under such evil auspices the pursuit of self-development will merely isolate the soul, and raise it to a pinnacle of self-delusion, which must eventually crumble and leave the pilgrim to begin anew.

The comparison of life to a pilgrimage is not a happy one, because the general idea of pilgrimage includes the acceptance of unnecessary hardships, that are to be repaid a thousandfold with spiritual bliss; a most unreasonable transaction. The path of true evolution should be one of joy, whatever the hardships of the road may be. As indications of progress they may be valuable, but as mere suffering they are irrelevant; for pain and pleasure are but the two poles of sensation and are peculiar to the personality. One who is living for mankind will have but little time to suffer on his own account.

When the personal point of view is abandoned, and a broader sympathy expands the thought of Self, the world we live in will become more beautiful, and our lives richer in the true joy of life.

Whether the world we live in shall be great or small, whether it shall be miserable or full of joy, whether it shall include the universe or close us in a prison of self-pity, that is for each one to decide. We make the world we live in; if it is not satisfactory we can remake it, if we will.

## THE CHALLENGE OF EASTER IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

FRANCES SAVAGE



ASTER-TIME," says Katherine Tingley, "is the time of the Christos-Spirit coming out into human life and into nature." Easter is a symbol of universal awakening: it speaks to us of budding trees, of fields and hills dressed in a fresh garment of green, of daffodils and lilies, of nesting birds, of fragrant spring breezes, and of the unspeakable delight of mere living! This is in itself reason enough for ceasing the regular round of duties, and celebrating the day

## THE CHALLENGE OF EASTER

with due ceremony. But setting aside the strong appeal of the out-of-doors, why do we celebrate Easter, for there must be some other meaning, some deeper significance in the Easter Festival?

Imagine for a moment what time would be to us if we had not the blessing of day and night, of summer and winter, of life and so-called death. It would be like traveling along an endless weary road, with no change of scenery, no grateful shade in which to rest our tired limbs, no respite, no escape from the ceaseless onward march of life. Such a prospect would be appalling; but Nature, in her beneficence, has ordained an alternation of activity and rest; so that night and the blessed relief of sleep follow the cares and worries of the day; and what we call time is divided up into short periods to make the traveling easier for us. And following this analogy out into a wider field, the even tenor of the year is divided up by certain mile-stones: the national and international festivals, such as Christmas and Easter; these come to us as reminders of ancient truths, of which our real selves are cognisant, but which our everyday selves are prone to forget. Each one of these festive milestones, so to speak, has a special message of its own; but to the student who delves beneath the surface of things, they are all relics of those ancient Mysteries that once formed the Wisdom-Religion of the Ages.

Easter, as we celebrate it today, is the result of a curious blending of various traditions: it symbolizes the rebirth or reawakening in nature; then it is connected with the Jewish Passover; and finally it commemorates the Resurrection of Christ. It is of great antiquity, and, like others of the Church-festivals, was in vogue among the 'Pagans,' long before the birth of Jesus, and was later adopted by the church; and certain events and festivals belonging to the Christian religion were attached to it. This was a well recognised fact among the early Church Fathers, for one of them, Augustine, has written the following:

"The very thing which is now called the 'Christian' religion, really was known to the ancients, nor was it wanting at any time from the beginnings of the human race up to the time Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, which had previously existed, began to be called Christian, and this in our day is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received that name."

The first aspect of Easter, that of rebirth in the kingdom of Nature, dates back within historical records, to our early Teutonic ancestors. The name Easter comes from the Anglo-Saxon goddess *Eostre*, or *Ostâra*, the goddess of spring-time, to whom the month of April was dedicated with festival, with flowers, and with song. The history of the connexion of the Easter-festival with the Jewish Passover is too long to go into in detail, but the name is preserved today in the Romance languages, which have the terms Pâques, Pascuas, etc., derived from the Hebrew verb

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

meaning to '*pass over*,' referring to the Biblical story of the destroying angel passing over the houses of the children of Israel, when he visited the homes of Egypt to destroy the first-born.

As to the Resurrection, we are all familiar with the story: how Jesus after his crucifixion was laid in the tomb, and how the priests and Pharisees sealed it fast with a huge stone, so that his disciples might not come in the night and steal him away. How the women came and wept about the sepulcher; and how, in spite of all precautions, after the third day, the angel came and rolled the stone away, and Jesus arose from the dead, and became one with his Father in heaven. This story, replete with symbolism, is pre-Christian in origin, and formed part of the ancient Mysteries.

Similar accounts are given of the Greek Dionysos, of the Egyptian Horus, and of other world-saviors. Whether they are true historically or not, need not concern us; but it is the great truth that is symbolized in these stories that is important for us to recognise. For each of us has hidden within the tomb of the physical man, with all its limitations, the divine Christos-Spirit, the buried Christ, walled in by the stone of personality and of passion and desire. But by the might of our own divinity we have the power to roll away the stone of matter that is binding us, to step out into new life and to be that which is our Greater Self.

Resurrection or Rebirth is a universal truth; resurrection — the rising again. It implies a former height from which we have fallen, but to which we can rise once more if we will. We see this truth symbolized about us daily in the kingdom of Nature: with every dawn of morning the sun appears to be born again to the splendor of the previous day. It may be hidden under a cloud, but it is there nevertheless. The flowers are reborn in the spring-time, after their sleep during the cold dark reign of winter; the tides of the ocean rise and fall, and rise again. Is man, then, the only part of creation that has no share in this rebirth? It is obvious that one short earth-life is not enough for the working out of all our aspirations and ideals; then should *we* not be privileged to return again and again, until we have worked out our own salvation? This is a question that might easily be asked by any thinking mind. And it is here that Theosophy, which is in itself but a resurrection of ancient wisdom, steps in, with its enlightening teachings of Reincarnation, and closely allied to it, the doctrine of Cycles. These two teachings are inseparable: the one is the complement of the other; indeed from one standpoint they are different phases of the same idea. All nature moves in circles: the earth circles about the sun, the moon around the earth. The plant has its cycles of growth and decay and rebirth; and with the lives of men and of nations the same truth is manifest.

Now the ancients always taught through symbolism; for symbols,

## THE CHALLENGE OF EASTER

even more than words, call up in us the realities for which the symbols stand; and it is strange to think that we have preserved many of these symbols from our ancestors, and now are using them blindly, after the reason for their use has long been forgotten. We are, in a sense, like children playing with costly instruments whose use and value they know nothing about. This is exemplified in the way we — that is we as a race — have taken the most sacred symbols of Egypt — a land that was hoary with age long before the Christian era began,— and are using them as ornaments of dress, according to the latest fashions, without the wearers having the slightest idea of the meaning of the symbols they are wearing. But that is unfortunately the trend of our modern civilization — to go through the outer forms of life, making use of whatever will appeal to the outer senses, with no thought as to the inner meaning of the words or objects with which we are so familiar.

But to return to the subject of Easter as regards symbolism: two of the symbols inseparable from our conception of Easter are the *rabbit* and the *egg*. The rabbit as an Easter symbol is a relic of the sacred hare, dedicated to the Goddess of Spring in the old Teutonic mythology. Among all the ancient races the egg was the favorite symbol of rebirth, and here we are still using it as an indispensable part of our Easter celebrations, but how many of us know why? In *The Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky points out the universality of the egg as a symbol, and in many interesting passages she throws light upon its significance. She says:

“The Egg was incorporated as a sacred sign in the cosmogony of every people on the Earth, and was revered both on account of its form and its inner mystery. From the earliest mental conceptions of man, it was known as that which represented most successfully the origin and secret of being.”— I, 359

She points out that the egg may still be seen carved upon many of the pre-historic monuments in Egypt, in India, in China, in Ireland, in America, and other lands. It is often accompanied by the serpent, which symbolized the circle, the emblem of Cyclic Law; and frequently the serpent is shown with an egg in its mouth; so that here again we see the close relation between the teachings of rebirth and the doctrine of cycles.

But the cycle in nature and in the life of man is, more properly speaking, a spiral. Although nature travels along a circular path, she never returns to exactly the same spot as before; there is always a change — an advance — in some direction. No two days are exactly alike; no two seasons; no two years. And so it is with the life of man; even one short earth-life is a successive drama of deaths and rebirths, of cycles of greater or lesser duration; and each differs from the last one by marking some point of progress gained. And applying this teaching practically, here is an interesting point to study in our own individual lives. Let us

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

watch ourselves impersonally; stand apart, as it were for a time from the conflicting thoughts and feelings that throng the mind within a comparatively short space of time. There are cycles of exhilaration and cycles of depression: everything seems to go splendidly one day, without any effort on our part; we are on the crest of the wave then; later, when we *know* perhaps that we have been making more effort than before to get on top of conditions and be master of ourselves, everything goes the wrong way; and in spite of our efforts we seem further behind than we were some time ago. How easy in the face of such circumstances to become discouraged; to say: where is the use of making any effort at all, since I arrive at no results! But on the other hand, knowing the law, and having studied its workings in our own natures, how much easier in the long run is it to say: 'Well, this is just the downward turn of the cycle, and I am not really so far behind as I was last time at this point!' It takes time and patience and long-continued effort to work past our own particular stumbling-blocks, but we can look at them optimistically, and realize that every sincere effort sends us forward and not backward. In a little book of ancient wisdom, translated by H. P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, we find these encouraging words:

"Learn that no efforts, not the smallest — whether in right or wrong direction — can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. 'A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again.' The pepper-plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn."

But to return once more to the question of symbology: the seed is of course another important symbol of Easter and of rebirth; like the egg, it symbolizes a great secret, *the secret of becoming*, for within its tiny compass lie all the possibilities of the future flower. It does not evolve in a moment, but day by day and step by step it attains to its growth, until the seed becomes a perfect plant. So the lesson to be learned from the seed is one of patient steady growth, of gradual evolution, directed by no outward force, but from within the self, until the desired goal is reached, and the soul attains its perfect blossoming.

We have said that man's life is a continual drama of deaths and rebirths — a "series of awakenings," in the words of H. P. Blavatsky. But just how frequent or how far-reaching those awakenings will be, depends, not upon outward circumstances, but upon the Spiritual Will of each one of us. And we need not wait until any set time to begin; each moment can be made a new beginning — a rebirth of the soul-qualities in our natures. It is true that change and decay are a part of the Law, yet we can make it a decay of the old forms that bound us, and held us from our best possibilities; we can change the disintegrating forces of our natures into forces that tell for reconstruction — for resurrection.

## THE CHALLENGE OF EASTER

Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and these words had a deeper meaning than possibly many of us realize. He knew his power. He had seized upon his inner Divine nature — the Christos-spirit — and made it a part of his life; through the force of his Spiritual Will, and through the utter selflessness of his efforts, he had risen even during his life, until he became one with his God. His was no Sunday-religion, to be put on or off, according to the day of the week, or the attitude of mind. It was a glowing, living reality, an essential part of his daily life. And what he did, everyone of us can do; for did he not say: "Greater things than these shall ye do"? We need to look at life from a new viewpoint; to cast aside old ideas and prejudices, and start upon a new basis. Seek for the God, the Christos-spirit within ourselves. And what better time to make this new beginning than right now, at this glorious Easter-tide? At this hour there is a mighty force sweeping over the world; the aggregate force of many hearts joined in a single purpose — to commemorate the Resurrection of the inner Christ. It is one of those "tides in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood, lead on to fortune." Then let us take it at the flood, and make this a time for a rebirth in a very real sense — a rebirth of all that is noblest and best in our natures, of all that made Christ, the Teacher, what he was. It is in our power to do this for ourselves at this very moment.

This is the challenge of Easter-time; the trees and the flowers, the blue sky overhead and the newness of life tingling through the air, are pleading with us, if we could only stop long enough to listen — pleading with us to delve down into the innermost recesses of our natures, to challenge ourselves, to face our weaknesses and the vain doubts and fears that keep us in the shadows, and to "live in the sunshine of thought and feeling." This can be done in the twinkling of an eye — the one act of will that will set our thought-currents in this new direction. It is the "taking of the kingdom of Heaven by violence," that has been written about. And it need be heralded by no fanfare of trumpets nor be proclaimed from the housetops; it is all accomplished in the silence and the stillness — in that inner chamber where the eternal spark burns bright and clear, like a "lamp which sheltered from the wind, flickereth not." To quote from one of the Theosophical writings:

"He who attains is he who has learned to live in the chamber where the flame of joy burns up and gilds the walls with living light, while without may be the noise and strain and sweat of effort and battle, in which he himself may be taking part."

But some of us live so far away from this inner chamber that it is all unknown to us. There are different strata of life: some live on the surface of things; to them existence is a confused mass of sights and sounds and

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

fleeting impressions, and they are so busy seeking new sensations, that they have no time to enter into the secret chamber of their natures, and listen for the guiding voice that is heard in the silence. The natures of others are cast in a deeper mold; they sense more keenly the contrast between the trivial and that which is of real import; between the fleeting and the everlasting.

The realities of life are glimpsed by us all at times: when we are plunged in deep sorrow — when we hear some exquisite bit of music, when we feel the sympathetic touch of nature in all her beauty, when we are touched by the warmth of a mother's love: then we know there is something deeper in life than those things we are clinging to as indispensable to our happiness. But those who have learned through suffering and self-conquest to dwell in the divine part of their natures, who are able to see in every vicissitude of life simply a lesson for the soul's experience, and who consequently are able to face with equanimity whatever of good and evil fortune life may have in store for them — those are unfortunately all too few in number.

In an Easter-address given in 1919, Katherine Tingley said:

"It is one of the greatest pities that poor humanity cannot always find itself in an exalted state, ever working in consonance with its highest aspirations and the noblest ideals that man possesses. A time like this is to me a very solemn time, a very beautiful time, when we can evoke from the innermost part of our natures something quite new, something that will bring home to us the power of the soul and make us feel more and more that we are essential parts of the great Universe, and that the future happiness, the future deliverance of humanity, absolutely depend upon our making nobler and more unselfish efforts."

We cannot think of rebirth without thinking of death — or that which men call death — for it is in reality not death at all. There can be nothing more beautiful than the Theosophical conception of death. It is simply a change, a rest for a time, from the cares of this world; it is rebirth, in a sense, into a new life. There is no fear attached to it; there is no anxiety to escape it; and when it comes to the true Theosophist, it finds him ready to welcome it, to lay aside his body like a worn-out garment, and to rest in quiet sleep until the turn of the wheel brings him back to rebirth in another earth-life, to learn new lessons and gain new experience. Surely there is nothing dreadful in this. And think what a load would be lifted from humanity, if the monster, the fear of death, could be eliminated. Think of the thought-energy and the time that would be saved for work that is useful and helpful; for building up our bodies and our minds to fit them for greater service, instead of holding them in the cramping, stultifying influence of the fear of death.

No one can express the Theosophical teaching about death more beautifully and convincingly than Katherine Tingley when she says:

## THE CHALLENGE OF EASTER

"How grandly Theosophy interprets the idea of death! I have presented the subject many times to some of you, but it always has a grander meaning to me, and is connected with this beautiful Easter-morning — the Resurrection-time. I am sure you will find afterwards that as the soul passes out, in the silence, into the new birth, if your hearts are attuned to the deeper touches, that soul would say: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life! I am the Resurrection and the Life!' And at such a time, instead of tears and regrets and pain and suffering, a great vista must open out to you. . . . We have bridged the gap between the brain-mind and the soul, and we are in the realm of broader thought; we are following the soul out into the New; we are freed from all those trials and difficulties that hold the body. While the body is going to dust, the soul is marching on, glimpsing the splendor of the Greater and the Grander Life afar."

Let us ask ourselves: 'Are we dissatisfied with conditions as they exist in our lives and the lives of those about us?' Then that is the first step towards rebirth; if we remain satisfied with half-truths, with vague indefinite ideas as to the real meaning of life, and as to why we are here on earth, then we may be sure our progress is being retarded. But the moment a man begins to feel stirring within him something greater than what he usually considers himself to be, that is the beginning of resurrection. And what we have to do is to seize hold of this feeling of the broad big sweep of things, that comes to us at times: to seize it courageously and with strength of will, and use it as a stepping-stone towards a grander plane of life. This is the message of Easter-time; it is an insistent challenge, even to the most discouraged, the most hopeless, the most despairing. It is calling to us in tones that will not be disregarded; we cannot remain deaf to it, for we, as integral parts not only of this great nation but of the whole human race, have a deep responsibility for the uplift of humanity.

So let us make this Easter-time a new beginning — a time of promise, sealed with a quality of will-power that knows no obstacles. With such a power of will surging through us, electrifying every atom of our being, it will not be difficult to respond understandingly to these words of Katherine Tingley, replete with the optimism and hope of the Theosophic teachings:

"Find the life. Live it; know the truth of all these things that strain and trouble and hurt you, and bring you to points of despair, and you will find them explained in accordance with the laws of Universal Truth; you will find that Justice overrules even what seems injustice. This knowledge once attained, I hold that man can then begin to work on lines of least resistance. It will give him such strength that he can rejoice at being under the control of these divine laws, and through his own divine will, day by day, in the different processes of his experience, he will journey on, slowly but surely, to the sunlighted heights that we are all seeking."

## EASTERN PROVERB

TALBOT MUNDY

**H**E who puts his hand into the fire knows what he may expect. Nor may the fire be blamed.

He who intrudes on a neighbor may receive what he does not expect. Nor may the neighbor be blamed.

The fire will not be harmed; but the neighbor may be.

Therefore, it is wiser to intrude into the fire than into other men's affairs; because every deed, of every kind, bears corresponding consequences to the doer.

The effect of meddling with fire is swiftly met. That debt is paid and done with. But a man may spend a thousand lives repaying wrong done to a neighbor.

Therefore, of the two indiscretions prefer thrusting thine own hand into the fire.

But there is a Middle Way, which avoids all trespassing.

## MIND IS LIKE A MIRROR

T. HENRY, M. A.

"Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions."—H. P. BLAVATSKY



**N**O maxim is more constantly needful and helpful to a student of self-knowledge than the above. When you are trying to dispel one illusion you are so apt to create another. The only way is to anchor to some point beyond the personality, and to adapt oneself to the spirit of the invocation: "Not my will, but thine be done!" The higher will which we invoke here is our own Higher Self, the center of wisdom within us.

Our thoughts are colored by our emotions, so that the mind cannot reflect clearly until the emotions are tranquil. For this reason it is well to put the thoughts out of our mind until the emotion has had time to subside; and then we can view the trouble clearly. If we do not do this, we shall probably set going a self-reproductive train of emotional thought that will produce illusions and perhaps lead to ill-judged action.

We often think that an emotion — of anger, fear, etc.— is caused by some thought or idea. But it may be that the emotion is the prime

## MYSTERIES THAT THEOSOPHY ILLUMINATES

agent in the matter, and the thought quite secondary. Careful observers have sometimes noticed the emotion coming first and the idea afterwards; which is a revelation of the workings of our nature. This is particularly the case with fears, which are often the result of nervous exhaustion. People so afflicted sometimes fear without having anything to fear about, until the mind gets to work and supplies an ostensible reason.

The case of the person who is out of tune, and seeking a quarrel, is all too well known. Here the anger is obviously not caused by any idea; it is there beforehand, and is in search of an idea to mate itself to, or a peg to hang itself on. It would be easy to go through the gamut of emotions, classifying them, and to illustrate the working of the same law in the case of each and all of them. Doubt and fear, pride and vanity, anger, affectional emotion, restlessness and inquisitiveness, envy, evil-thinking: the reader can supply the instances from his own experience, whether of his own or of other selves. How can a judgment so warped be clear? A man who can discount the effect of his emotions, gains great poise and clarity, much peace and efficiency. What is more, his own freedom from delusions has gifted him with the eye to see those of others.

Most people are so occupied with their own ideas that you have no fear they will penetrate yours. But you are in awe of the man whose mind is tranquil and eye clear; he can discern your subtile motives; he is not imposed upon.

Mind has a dual nature: it can reflect the sunlight of wisdom, or it can send back upon us the emanations from our lower nature. Besides, the astral light teems with the thoughts and emotions proceeding from many people; and these, floating into the mind, are pregnant of illusions. To get beyond the reach of all this confusion, we must break the chain of self-reproductive thought, and appeal to a source outside of it. To silence the vagrant thoughts of the brain is the first necessity.

## ONE OR TWO MYSTERIES THAT THEOSOPHY ILLUMINATES

MARY LEWIS ALLEN



TO the individual who is fond of penetrating below the surface of phenomena in search of causes, Theosophy must offer always an especial and significant appeal.

To many of us, who in earlier years have waded hopelessly through the mire of dogma toward a far and not too certain goal of 'salvation,' the ancient Theosophical teachings have come as firm

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

ground to our feet — even as the firm ground of some clear, windswept height. To many a one, too, that recognition or recovery (as it must be) of old Truth has been instant at first encounter even with the literature of the ancient teaching.

Personally (if I may say so), it is always an amazement to me that Theosophy does not go home as truth to the hearts of all earnest inquirers *on sight*, by very reason of its sanity. And one is impressed with how much those who fail to embrace its teachings are deprived of, just in the insight it gives into the meanings of life (quite aside even from its regenerative effects on character).

For, of a surety, Theosophy makes the dark places light to her followers. Not only does she add bright significance to knowledge already acquired, but she supplies a wealth of new-old wisdom that sheds rare meaning on many baffling problems of the day, prominent among which in the scientific and religious spheres is the much-debated question of Evolution (quite recent to western thought and study).

A few moments, then, for the consideration of this comprehensive subject (evolution) as illumined by the great Searchlight of Theosophy.

Admittedly, all ideas of progress, through evolutionary processes, are fascinating to thoughtful minds, and have more interest for us, and even hope, perchance, than most of the antiquated dogmas — just because of this idea of progress upward — “out of the slime” at least.

Personally (I believe) one would rather take his chances as evolving man (even if the next step to angelhood were not just assured) than pin a dull faith to the “worm of the dust” theory. Is not this verily food for smiles? Do not the very figures of speech connected with this reflect the absurdity and cant of the doctrines they denote?

But thanks to Theosophy we are not left to any doubtful choice. *Its* theory of Evolution is both deep and clear; supported by its attendant principle of Involution it is so logical as to satisfy fully the demands of reason, while, because of its spiritual foundation, it offers hope and incentive to human endeavor.

As to man’s status in the Universal Plan, how Theosophy changes all that! No longer worm of the dust but spark of Divinity which by its very inherency, must in the end even through painful ascent, return to seek its source. As an inspired poet has so beautifully sung:

“After long ages lost in strange mazes, wandering, dissatisfied — in sin and sorrow, lonely, despised and fallen, at length the soul (after her many thousand-year-long exile) returns to Paradise!”

Or again:

“Lo, the baffled, beaten and weary soul! Lo, the crowned and immortal God!”

## MYSTERIES THAT THEOSOPHY ILLUMINATES

But even in the face of this glorious Hope, discouragement sometimes may overtake us in the personal consciousness that our progress along spiritual lines is so slow. But (we reflect) so is the cosmic process from the clod to man slow — infinitely slow — a process of aeons! Of saving importance though, in this connexion, is the fact that this deliberate progress upward along the evolutionary line is also everywhere steady and consecutive, and herein undoubtedly lies our clue.

Drawing the inference is not our chief and only vital concern, then, to make sure that our ascent along the path of self-directed evolution be also steady and unbroken even if (to us) seemingly slow. It may even lie in the necessity of things that the ascent from “the corruptible to the incorruptible” be arduous and long. Not by leaps and bounds, but “step by step we climb,” as our revered Leader (with that genius for helping others born of Theosophy’s own knowledge) so simply and illuminatingly pictured for us the soul’s difficult pilgrimage in one of her recent addresses. And is it not the secret in all its practical simplicity of man’s “winning toward the heights”?

Closely bound up, of course, with the Theosophical interpretation of Evolution are the twin theories of Karma and Reincarnation, and when the light of these sublime principles is turned upon human life how changed becomes the aspect of everything pertaining to the personal life, even as to its seeming inequalities and injustices. In the light of Karma behold those forbidding oppressors of man transformed into kindly (if stern) admonishers or even to angels of light! For so long as man can see the reason in adverse conditions, can he find it in himself to bear them. It is the old, cruel, insensate doctrine of the worm ground into the dust to suffer *as* such, that kindles in man (according to his temperament) either rank rebellion or black despair. With the conviction that our punishments are just, springs the courage and the heart to bear them, knowing, as Karma teaches us, that we *can* reap only what we have sown — in any life — and that by endurance here we may in some other life turn the defeat of pain to victory. As someone has potently expressed this never-failing Karmic law: “And the pains I endured in one body became powers which I wielded in the next. And so I grew in strength.”

Conversely, too, the thought occurs: Must not the pains we fail to subdue in this body become fetters to bind and weights to drag in the next? And so failing should we increase in weakness rather than grow in strength? But the awakened soul of man, born of Divinity, will not tolerate that picture! He *wills* to struggle, to suffer *all* even to the end, that he may conquer weakness and grow in fortitude which is strength!

But most of all perhaps does Theosophy cast its illuminating light on

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

the mysterious shadow of death, and in so doing lifts man's heaviest burden. It seems as if the most casual observer must be struck with the difference between the Theosophical attitude and that of the average orthodox believer toward death and life thereafter.

I once heard a woman of considerable note (an avowed member of the Church of England) say in substance (addressing a company of Theosophists): "We of the Churches believe of course in immortality; we have faith that we shall live again after bodily death. But you Theosophists seem to know it."

The hearer was much impressed (I recall) with the distinction this churchwoman so sincerely and honestly drew, and it was most significant. Similarly, one is reminded of the friendly but continued controversy between Whitman and Ingersoll on this subject. To Ingersoll's frequent assertion that though man might hope for it he could never be certain of immortality, Whitman's reply was invariably with intensity of conviction: "But Bob *I* know it, for I *see* it!" (immortality). Lamentably, Ingersoll (as we know) for all his endowment of heart and intellect still lacked that saving and transcendent gift of vision which was Whitman's birthright.

So much for the "intimations" of Immortality of the great ones, but it is recognised that many an obscure person, humble though his attainments, likewise "sees and knows," in common with the great ones. Many a soul who in illness has come down to the very verge of that Deep River has sensed something of the release and glory that death hides, and returning, has carried ever afterwards through life the light of some unforgettable experience in his deepest heart. No argument, scientific or otherwise, could carry weight with such a one that there was not immortal and abundant life beyond the grave.

But nowhere is this difference between the Theosophical and orthodox attitude towards death more impressively felt (it seems to me), than in the character of their respective services for the departed. It has been my recent personal experience to observe this difference. Listening and suffering under the depression induced by the one, I have given silent thanks in my heart for our beautiful Theosophical form of service. What dissimilarity between the old, crude harrowing form of memorial, and the comfort and serene beauty of the Theosophical rites, where, instead of harrowing the emotions, emphasis is laid only upon such thoughts as invigorate and stimulate courage to meet the personal loss. Submergence of personal sorrow, unselfishness in a word, is the keynote. And here, in this atmosphere of beauty and uplift, wherein blind grief is transmuted to gentle, almost transcendent sorrow, might not one almost catch in vision (however fleeting) a glimpse of that ecstasy that death means?

## AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

At least, with that clarity of mind and feeling which is akin to vision, we must sense here afresh the beauty and truth expressed in the poet's lines:

"Death no longer terrible  
But full of poignant, strange expansions."

Truly, may it not be for the illuminating light shed upon so-called (or misnamed) death that we owe to Theosophy our deepest debt of gratitude?

## AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

V. MINOT

*(A Paper written for the William Quan Judge Theosophical Club,  
for February 15, 1924)*

 HIS question is another way of asking whether brotherhood is a fact in nature, with especial attention being given to the problem of brotherhood between man and man. Relatively to relations of one nation to another in the affairs of the world a tolerable degree of unity and brotherhood of feeling has been attained in many individual families,— between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. Also a number of individual nations considered by themselves have in our day been able to maintain within their own citizenship such degree of brotherhood as to make civil wars of much less occurrence than international wars. Thus the essence of our subject at hand is vitally connected with the problem of international peace.

I am going to speak of some recent organizations out in the world who are striving hard for peace, because of the terrible disasters of the late world-war. Katherine Tingley has been telling us for some time that Theosophy alone holds the real key to the problem of international peace, because of its teachings of the Divinity of man, of the brotherhood of man, of the dual nature of man, of Karma and Reincarnation, and because of the example set by the life at Lomaland. Nevertheless it is interesting to note how strongly men elsewhere are feeling the urge of the Higher Law for peace on earth, though without a practical knowledge of Theosophy they cannot secure a really permanent peace on earth.

In studying the peace-movements of the outside world for the year 1922, in an encyclopaedic year-book, I found that nearly twenty different organizations with centers in England or America were making it their

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

chief task to bring about international peace. In this same year nine thousand citizens of Massachusetts presented to President Harding a petition asking him to call a world-convention for the outlawry of war.

Mr. P. Kerr, Lloyd George's confidential secretary during the war, has spoken in public addresses on behalf of the outlawry of war. At the 22nd International Peace-Congress held for several days in July, 1922, of which Senator La Fontaine (a member of our Organization, as far as I know) was President, G. Lansbury — at one of the sessions — called upon his hearers to refuse to fight under any circumstances, because it was contrary to the law of love; a resolution demanding the complete disarmament of the nations was adopted with acclamation. At another session of this same Congress Dr. Olga Misar of Austria urged women to bring up their children in the determination to refuse to fight. That the Congress was acceptable to the sentiment of England was attested by the address of welcome given it by the Lord Mayor of London. Who can tell how much the thought-force streaming constantly out from Lomaland has to do with such peace-activities elsewhere?

Reading *The New Way* recently I was much struck by the following quotation from W. Q. Judge:

“Brotherhood is not sentiment, is not emotion, is not so-called love. It is putting one's self mentally in the very place of another and realizing his difficulties, while showing him that true compassion for which we would hope in like place.”

This quotation tells us that brotherhood must start in the thinking part of man first, and Katherine Tingley in *Theosophy: the Path of the Mystic* says that victories over our selfish natures are won in thought first. The above words of Mr. Judge strongly hint to us the value of studying the language, literature, and culture of other nations for the sake of broadening out the mind and giving us kindlier feelings towards persons from other countries than our own. Much could be written on this subject for which there is not space in this paper.

*The Voice of the Silence* by H. P. Blavatsky points out to us that the real fields of the battles of life are in the interior world of man's thought and aspiration, though of course we at Lomaland are all taught that no inner victory is complete without bringing the other principles of our being into entire accord with the interior decision and judgment. We cannot have human brotherhood among the nations of the earth until the men of these nations conquer their lower natures sufficiently to have the same feelings of love towards men of other nations as they at present entertain towards the members of their own family circle.

## THE WISDOM OF APOLLONIUS, THE PHILOSOPHER OF TYANA

### XVI

P. A. MALPAS



At daybreak, Apollonius paid his adorations to the sun and stood, as was his custom, in meditation. While so doing, the youngest of the gymnosophists, Nilus, ran to him and announced that they were coming. Apollonius mildly remarked that they were doing the right thing, since he had come from the sea to visit them. Then he followed to the portico.

Thespesion, the chief of the gymnosophists, commenced with a long discourse based on what he had heard. The gist of it was that they were far superior in wisdom to the Indians because they needed no magic arts, no display, no authoritative tones, but simple virtue and the conquest of desire and envy, with abstention from that which has life. In fact, it was precisely that upside-down view of the Indian life and philosophy that an enemy would make so plausibly credible. Thespesion was very solemn and serious in what he said.

Apollonius in reply declared his philosophy. Not as that extraordinary product of the dark age, the missionary of the sword or the book, but as a merchant with rare and costly merchandise for sale to others who have precious store of wisdom's treasures to exchange for his own wares. He told how the various sects held out this and that before his youthful gaze, but one that stood apart, of such unspeakable beauty as to have subdued Pythagoras himself, called him.

"As soon as she understood I was not addicted to any particular sect, and was as yet ignorant of her, she addressed me in these words: 'O young man, I am sad, and full of cares; if any man conforms to my rule of life, he must remove from his table all animal food and forget the use of wine. He must not trouble the cup of wisdom which is set in all hearts abstaining from wine. He is to wear no garments made of either hair or wool, his shoes must be made of the bark of trees, and his sleep must be wherever he can get it. If I find him susceptible of love, I have deep pits, into which Nemesis, the minister of wisdom, will plunge him. I am so severe to my own followers that I have bridles made for curbing the tongue.

"Attend now, and I will tell you the rewards which await him who has made me his choice.

"He shall possess, without a rival, temperance and justice; he shall

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

be more a terror to tyrants than their slave, and shall be more acceptable to the gods by his humble offerings of little value, than they who shed the blood of bulls. When once he is made pure I will give him a knowledge of hereafter, and so fill his visual ray with light as to make him capable of distinguishing between gods and heroes, and of appreciating duly all shadowy phantasms, whenever they assume the likenesses of mortals.' This is the life I have chosen, O learned Egyptian, and which I have done in obedience to sound sense and the precepts of Pythagoras. In doing it, I think I have neither deceived myself nor have been deceived by others."

Such was his description of the Pythagorean rule. He said that the teachings of Plato had been so corrupted in Athens by the admission of other doctrines, that the Athenians were not those who had the knowledge of the soul. He turned his mind to the Egyptians when a youth, but his preceptor pointed the way to the Indians as being the parents of the Egyptian wisdom, precisely as the Ethiopians themselves had been Indians in times past.

For some reason the Ethiopians were ashamed of being formerly Indians, and they made the most strenuous efforts to conceal their origin.

"You yourselves were the instructors of Pythagoras in his philosophy, which you recommended, and approved as Indians. But now, ashamed of what caused the earth's displeasure, which forced you to migrate to this country, you had rather pass for any other people than Ethiopians come from India. You have worshiped the gods more after the ritual of the Egyptians than your own," declared Apollonius.

Apollonius spoke so well and reasoned so clearly that the learned Thespesion blushed under his dark and swarthy complexion. Damis was delighted, and so was Nilus, the youngest of the gymnosophists, who leaped with joy and running to Apollonius took his hand and asked him to tell all that had passed in India.

Apollonius said he could refuse nothing to those who love science and were of a docile disposition, but to Thespesion and others who despised everything Indian, he was not willing to communicate any wisdom. Thespesion brought out a convincing argument that surely Apollonius would not come as a sea-merchant and expect to sell his goods without allowing them to be seen and examined?

"Certainly not," was the answer. "But if as the vessel touched the beach one came down to it and abused the cargo, the ship, and the country it came from, and even expected the merchant in the ship to agree with him, I would neither anchor nor tie the ship to the land, but put to sea again."

Nilus said: "This time, I take the cable and ask you to share your cargo with me. I will do more; I go on board as a passenger who knows

## THE WISDOM OF APOLLONIUS

and acknowledges the excellency of what you have brought home.”

Then Thespesion agreed with Apollonius, and the secret came out. “Do you wonder that we felt as you do now when we heard of your attack on us, before you had seen us?” Apollonius was astonished, but when he was told of the schemes of Euphrates and Thrasybulus he understood, though he said the Indians would never have been so deceived, for they were too wise and knew futurity. He warned them of the danger of their credulity; it would surely make them subject to false accusation in their turn, for such is human nature.

Thespesion little liked the long rebuke Apollonius gave him and tried to pass the matter off lightly, saying they were things of little moment and he would like to make Apollonius and Euphrates friends again.

“That may be so,” said Apollonius, “but who is going to restore *you* to my favor? A man whose character is attacked by lies has some reason to be indignant.”

Thespesion made up for his blunder as best he could.

Nilus brought a meal for Apollonius with an air of the utmost respect. “The Sage sends this hospitality to you and to me,” he said, “I have invited myself to dine at your table, so you cannot say I come uninvited.”

Apollonius saw the application of the remark. “Sit down and eat,” he said. “I accept this tender of your person and character with great pleasure, as I am told your attachment to the wisdom of the Indians and Pythagoras is great.”

“I have a huge appetite,” said Nilus.

“For God’s sake, eat as much as you please,” said Apollonius. “You will give me matter of conversation, and I will be answerable for the rest.”

Thus was Nilus pledged to Apollonius as his disciple, but the formality in the way of the necessity of the consent of the gymnosophists, which Apollonius pointed out, was of small moment, because Nilus had gone to them on the report that they were a colony of the Indian School of Iarchas. The father of Nilus had been captain of the one Egyptian ship permitted to visit the coast of India to trade. He had met Indians who told him of the school of Indian philosophy and had brought the report of the Ethiopians being from India and of the Indian school. The gymnosophists gladly enrolled him among themselves, though inveighing against the Indians, so that he had the full intention of going to sea in search of the Hill of the Sages, if he had not met Apollonius. Therefore his life had always been dedicated to the Indians, as he had joined the gymnosophists under a misapprehension.

Apollonius asked for a reward for his acceptance of the new disciple. Nilus promised anything he had to give.

“I ask, in the first place, that whatever choice you make shall be made

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

for yourself alone, and next that you shall not trouble the gymnosophists by giving them counsel that will not serve them." That was all the condition Apollonius made. So they lay on the grass and went to sleep for the night.

The following day a great debate on art and the representation by the Ethiopians of the gods as animals took place. Apollonius was for the Greek art as being the outcome of Imagination rather than the Egyptian Imitation, which was degrading as representing the gods. Thespesion declared they were occult symbols and therefore justified. "There was an old Athenian," he said, to clinch his argument, "a man by the name of Socrates, who was as great a fool as ourselves. He thought a dog, or a goose, or even a plane tree were gods, and swore by them."

"He was no fool," said Apollonius. "He was a divine and truly wise man. He swore by these things, not as being gods, but lest he should swear by the Gods."

Other debates followed on the customs of the Greeks and on justice, the immortality of the soul and nature. It is interesting to students of old philosophies to note that the Ethiopians treated quite as a matter of course Apollonius's account of his former incarnation as captain of a big ship. The doctrine was evidently not new in Ethiopia, any more than in India or Greece or Judaea or Gaul.

When Apollonius announced his intention to depart for the sources of the Nile the gymnosophists declared that he had an excellent guide in Timasion who knew the country well and needed no purification in visiting such a place, wherein resides a divinity. Nilus they called aside and in private endeavored to dissuade him from going with Apollonius.

But he returned to the eleven. These followers of Apollonius saw him laughing to himself, but such was their respect for silence they would not ask him what had happened, if he did not choose to say.

So Apollonius with his twelve disciples sought the country where the Nile has its sources, with the river on their left and the mountains before them.

The cataracts made such a din that Damis actually suggested turning back, but Apollonius pressed forward to the end of his journey. In an Ethiopian village he rid the people of a vampire; this was regarded as a great feat of practical knowledge. The incident is described in the quaint language of the time, making it look like a fairy-tale.

Returning from Ethiopia to Alexandria, Apollonius found Euphrates ever more bitter against him. As he had told Thespesion, he bore no malice towards Euphrates, but the latter could never forgive his tacit rebuke of his love of money. Apollonius left Menippus and Nilus to deal with Euphrates, while he himself showed much attention to the

## THE WISDOM OF APOLLONIUS

latter disciple, whom they had found amongst the gymnosophists.

### TITUS

After Titus, the son of Vespasian, had taken Jerusalem, and "filled all places with the dead," the nations round about offered him crowns of which he did not think himself deserving. He said that it was not he that performed such mighty deeds, but that he lent his arm to god in the just exercise of his vengeance.

This answer was approved by Apollonius as being a proof of the wisdom of Titus and of his knowledge in divine and human things, as also of his great moderation in declining to be crowned for having shed blood. He then wrote Titus a letter, to be taken by Damis:

"Apollonius to Titus, Emperor of the Romans, health.

"To you who refuse to be crowned on account of your success in war I give the crown of moderation, seeing you are so well acquainted with the reasons entitling you to that honor. Farewell."

Titus was well pleased with this letter.

"In my own name and that of my father, I hold myself your debtor, and will be mindful of you," he declared. "*I have taken Jerusalem, but you have taken me.*"

When Titus was invested with the imperial dignity, he set out for Rome to take his place as colleague with his father Vespasian. But first thinking of what consequence it might be to him to have even a short conference with Apollonius, he requested him to come to Argos for that purpose. Titus embraced him and said the Emperor, his father, had written to him of all he wished to know.

"At present I have a letter, wherein he says he considers you as his benefactor, and one to whom we are indebted for what we are. I am only thirty years of age, and have arrived at the same honors as my father did at sixty. I am called on to govern, perhaps before I have learnt to obey, and I fear to engage to do what I am not equal to perform."

Apollonius, stroking Titus's neck, which was like that of an athlete, said: "Who could subject a bull with so fine a neck to the yoke?"

Titus replied: "He who reared me from a calf!" referring to his father.

Apollonius was pleased with the ready answer and said: "When a kingdom is directed by the vigor of youth and wisdom of age, what lyre or flute can produce such sweet and harmonious music. The virtues of old age and youth will be united, and the consequence will be that the former will acquire vigor and the latter decorum and order by the union."

"But, O Tyanean, what advice have you to give concerning the best mode of governing an empire?" asked Titus.

"None to you," answered Apollonius. "You are self-instructed, and

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

by the manner in which you show obedience to your father, no doubt can be entertained of your becoming like him. But I will give you my friend Demetrius to attend you whenever you wish and to advise you on what is good to be done. His wisdom consists in liberty of speech, in speaking truth, and an intrepidity arising from a *cynical* (in Greek, *dog-like*) spirit."

Titus was troubled at the idea of a cynic as an adviser, but Apollonius told him that all he meant was that Demetrius should be his dog to bark for him against others and against himself if he offended in anything. He would always do this with wisdom, and never without reason.

"Give me this dog-companion, then," said Titus. "He shall have full permission to bite me whenever he finds me acting as I ought not."

"I have a letter of introduction, ready to send to him at Rome where he is now philosophizing," said Apollonius.

"I am glad of it," replied Titus, the new co-emperor. "I wish someone would write to you in my favor and recommend you to accompany me on my journey.

"You may depend upon seeing me, whenever it shall be to the advantage of both," said Apollonius.

When they were alone Titus declared that he wished to ask one or two very intimate personal questions. Receiving permission, he asked whom he should guard against in regard to his life, as he already was under some apprehension, though he would not wish to show fear where none existed.

"Herein you will be but prudent and circumspect," said Apollonius, "and of all men I think it is your duty to be on your guard." Then looking up, he swore by the sun he would have spoken about this even if no question had been asked. For the gods commanded him to declare to Titus that during his father's life, he should guard against his greatest enemies, and after Vespasian's death against his most intimate friends.

"What kind of death shall I die?" asked Titus.

"The same as Ulysses," said Apollonius, "for he is said to have received his death from the sea."

Damis interpreted this to mean that Titus should beware of the sting of the fish trygon, with which it was affirmed Ulysses was wounded.

It is historical that Titus died from eating a 'sea-hare,' a fish from which they say the most deadly poison of sea or land exudes. Nero was in the habit of mixing this liquid in the food of his greatest enemies and Domitian gave it to his brother Titus, not because he thought there would be any difficulty with him as a colleague on the throne, but because he thought he would prefer not to have so mild and benevolent a partner in joint rule with him over the Roman empire.

As they parted in public, they embraced, and Apollonius said aloud:

## THE WISDOM OF APOLLONIUS

“Vanquish your enemies in arms and surpass your father in virtues.”

Here is the letter:

“Apollonius the philosopher to the dog Demetrius, health.

“I give you to the Emperor Titus that you may instruct him in all royal virtues. Justify what I have said of you; be everything to him, but everything without anger. Farewell.”

Thus Apollonius, the greatest philosopher of the West in “the first century,” gave the Roman Empire two of its best Emperors, as they themselves acknowledged.

The people of Tarsus of old bore no kindness to Apollonius, on account of his outspoken reproaches against their soft and effeminate manners. However, at this time they loved him as if he had been their founder and greatest support.

Once when Titus was sacrificing in public, the whole people thronged round him with a petition on matters of the greatest importance. He said he would forward it to his father Vespasian and would intercede in their interests.

Then Apollonius came forward and asked what would Titus do if he could prove that some of those present were enemies who had stirred up revolt in Jerusalem and assisted the Jews against him. “If I could prove all this, what do you think they would deserve?”

“Instant death!” said Titus, without a moment’s hesitation.

“Then are you not ashamed to show more promptitude in punishing delinquents than in rewarding those who never offended, and assuming to yourself authority to punish whilst you defer that of recompensing until you have seen your father?”

Titus was not displeased with this direct reasoning.

“I grant their petition, as I know my father will not be angry with me for having submitted to truth and to you,” he said.

Tarsus was not very far from Tyana, the birthplace of Apollonius, and this incident was doubtless long remembered of the fearless philosopher, “the Tyanean.”

After his return from Ethiopia, Apollonius traveled much, but usually made short journeys and visited no new countries. He passed some time in Lower Egypt, visiting the Phoenicians, Cilicians, Ionians, and Acheans, also the Italians, but wherever he went he made a point of showing himself always the same, unchanged. He taught wherever he found men ready to receive his teachings.

At this time the towns on the left of the Hellespont were subject to earthquakes. Certain Egyptians and Chaldaeans (read charlatans?) taking advantage of the alarm, went up and down collecting money for sacrifices to Neptune and Tellus, the gods of sea and land. They put the

## THE THEOSOPHICAL PATH

cost at the enormous sum of ten talents, but in their fear towns and individuals paid all they could, for these money-changers said they could do nothing until all the money was in the hands of their bankers.

Apollonius drove them out. Then inquiring into the cause of the anger of Neptune and Tellus he offered the proper expiatory sacrifices at almost no expense, and the earth had rest. Seditions and dissensions at Antioch were likewise interrupted by an earthquake and Apollonius, being present, declared:

“A god hath manifested himself among you for the restoration of peace.” He drew the lesson that these dissensions would make their city like the cities of Asia, and ruin them. He seemed to imply that a city, like a man, improves or ruins its body by its conduct.

*(To be continued)*