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## PASSING ON A VITAL PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

By JAN H. VENEMA

This article, translated from the Dutch magazine *Manas* (The Hague, Holland), may in a sense be regarded as a response to our editorial SPEAKING OUT in *Eclectic* No. 1, where we invited Theosophists to contribute constructive answers to questions raised as to the future of Theosophy and methods of work for its preservation and the promulgation of the original teachings. The author has been a student of Theosophy since boyhood; he was for many years a National President of the T.S. (Point Loma) in Holland, and is now giving lectures in the School for the Study and Promulgation of the Esoteric Philosophy, which has branches in The Hague, Arnhem, and a Correspondence Section for the provinces. His experience over many years has persuaded him that the most constructive method of work is not by way of big Conventions (though at intervals they may have their place for special purposes), or even by lectures to large audiences, but by getting down to real theosophical study in smaller groups. The times of large audiences—coming-and-going people—are past, he says, and Theosophy in its deeper aspects is far too serious a cause in this world. The School, which has existed from the years after the second World War in some form or other, is attracting *students* through the agency of public and private study-groups, urging the enrolled inquirers to put the philosophy into practice in daily life.—Eps.

The wisdom-religion, as the ancient Theosophia is sometimes called, embraces a knowledge of the fundamentals which today we describe with the words: science, philosophy, religion, and art. Those among us who have made a thorough study of this Theosophia can say with William Q. Judge that it is an *Ocean* of knowledge, a metaphor referring to the shallow parts and also the 'unfathomable depths' which will satisfy the demands of the keenest mind. We speak in this connection also of esoteric and exoteric knowledge—words which are often either misunderstood or wrongly interpreted. In the great works by H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*, and in the works of G. de Purucker, *The Esoteric Tradition* and *Studies in Occult Philosophy*, this has been sufficiently mentioned. This knowledge, a true *philosophy of life*, has been passed on throughout the ages in different ways. Always, however, the keys of *universality* and *analogy* were given with it, as without these one cannot judge the 'unfathomable depths,' which in human language define the laws and structure of the universe in which we live and move and have our being. The serious student of this grand science realizes that he will always be a pupil, a disciple, however much he tries to penetrate into the *Gūpta-Vidyā*, the esoteric wisdom of the ages, and source of all truth. This will fill him with humility and keep him mindful of the words: *Iti mayā śrutam* (thus have I heard and thus shall I pass on to the best of my knowledge.)

Our School for the Study and Promulgation of the Esoteric Philosophy works on this basis, just as did similar schools in the past. It is, therefore, indeed a school where we are all *pupils*. It is not a 'club' or 'society' or 'groupage', as some people seem to think, for the simple reason that there are no 'members of the board', but only *workers* and

*pupils* who try to understand the symbolism of the sacred science, in this way learning from each other. That the School also organizes lectures and occasionally programs for radio and television, such as any school may do, does not make it a Society or Club, with all that pertains to those words. (See our folder about Methods of Work of the School).

William Quan Judge, close associate of H. P. Blavatsky often called attention in his terse way to these methods of working. He speaks of a *union* not in name but *work* and *deed*, naming as a parallel Freemasonry, a world-wide brotherhood which works for the moral and spiritual uplifting of mankind. But brotherhood, he says, should not be just a catch-word. Let us quote his words from *The Theosophical Movement* of September 1970, and bear in mind that they were written in 1893:

"Most important of all is a deep and living feeling of harmony and brotherhood. A union in name has no force or power. Eighteen years ago we formed the union, the attempt to create a nucleus of a universal brotherhood, and since then we should have made some progress towards realizing what was then but a sound. Such an actual brotherhood is an important fact, its absence a very great obstruction and difficulty. Too many have failed to make brotherhood a real thing in their life, leaving it merely as a motto on their shield. Our brotherhood must naturally include men and women of very various characters, each with different views of nature, having personal characteristics which may or may not grate upon others as the case may be. The first step then to take is to accept and tolerate personally all your fellows. In no other way can we begin to approach the realization of the great ideal. The absence of this acceptance of others is a mortal defect. It leads to suspicion, and suspicion ruptures our union. In an assembly where harmony is absent and brotherhood is not, the labors of those assembled are made almost nil, for an almost impenetrable cloud rolls out and covers the mental plane of all present. But let harmony return, and then the collective mind of all becomes the property of each, sending down into the mind of everyone a benediction which is full of knowledge."

H. P. Blavatsky says somewhere: "Those who have been fighting courageously amidst the present day materialism, self-interest and egoism for the rights of man and his divine nature, shall if they win the good fight, be the teachers of the many in the future periods and thus be their benefactors."

Nature gives up her innermost secrets and imparts true wisdom only to him who seeks truth for its own sake, and who craves for knowledge in order to confer benefits on others, not on his own unimportant personality.

—H. P. Blavatsky

## HOW "ISIS UNVEILED" WAS WRITTEN

*Publisher's Weekly*, November 22, 1971, has a full page display advertisement of H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology*, stating that it is a new unabridged 2-volume illustrated edition edited and annotated by Boris de Zirkoff, and issued by the Publishers of Quest Books, The Theosophical Publishing House, 306 West Geneva Road, Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. The price is \$20.00 for the two volumes. It is worthy of note that this is the first time since 1877 that any commercial journal of repute has advertised any work by H. P. Blavatsky, and to this extent.

It should be emphasized that this edition, which takes its place now as an integral part of *The Collected Writings of H. P. Blavatsky*, has a completely new Index, and a Bibliographical Appendix of a kind never before attempted, and contains much additional information about the works quoted by H.P.B., supplementing what appears in the footnotes of the work itself. Forty-eight illustrations enhance the volumes generously.

The following are extracts from "Introductory" to this new edition. Readers are referred to the complete Introductory for a vivid and authentic outline of the historical background against which this first great work of H. P. Blavatsky (1877) is projected.—Eps.

In spite of its many imperfections and shortcomings, as a literary production—which we have examined on the basis of facts and quoted statements by the author herself—*Isis Unveiled* remains to this very day the most astounding compendium of occult facts and doctrines in the Theosophical Movement. Its contents are of the most varied kind, its array of evidence has never been surpassed, its authoritative character has never been questioned, and its intrinsic value has not been superseded or duplicated by *The Secret Doctrine*.

The appeal of this work to readers and students has hardly ever slackened, and edition after edition has been exhausted no matter by whom published. To those who are fairly well acquainted with the later writings of H.P.B., but who have neglected to look into the pages of *Isis Unveiled*, this work contains priceless revelations of natural facts, and illuminating thoughts and sidelights on the mysteries of Nature never suspected before. The facts described in it can be ignored and set aside by nonbelievers, but they cannot be successfully challenged and shown to be false. Therefore the work stands even today as a living challenge to all those whose minds are self-imprisoned within the walls of denial, and whose spiritual sight is impeded by homemade blinkers.

Where can we find passages as authoritative in their bearing and as eloquent in their purport and language as those, for instance, which deal with the ancient Egyptian civilization and its unique achievements, or those which outline the fundamental propositions of Oriental philosophies and of genuine Magic? Where else can we find the sweeping view of the endless horizon which discloses in broad outline, supported by astounding facts, the universal character of the Occult Tradition, the immense antiquity of true Magic, its noble origin and transcendent power, and the fathomless and unquenchable springs from which it flows?

In many instances, however, H.P.B., acting on instructions from her Superiors, merely hinted at certain occult teachings, in this first work from her pen. Their elaboration was reserved for later years.

Some have declared *Isis Unveiled* to be without definite plan. Consider the evidence: *Isis Unveiled* proclaims the fact that there were ancient Mystery-Schools in the guardianship of men who knew and who were servants of truth; that these Mysteries existed in periods of history which were

fit for them to exist in; that some two thousand years ago, a wall was built to shut them off from the knowledge of men, while some of the ancient lore was incorporated in a twisted and distorted form into a religio-political system which eventually became known as the Christian Church; that as this was done, no effort was spared to root out and destroy the traces of the action; that at the same time, along with efforts to stem the tide as far as possible, a parallel movement was set on foot to preserve and protect the ancient truths, until in later times, they would again become known for the benefit of all men; and that they were so preserved, partly in places inaccessible to us now, and partly in the fragments of ancient literature which had been saved and had survived, and which are being gradually rediscovered today and reinterpreted by scholars all over the world.

If this is not a definite literary plan, what is it? H.P.B. conclusively proved that *the record was there*, and explained what that record was, at least partially so. Can anyone conceive a better plan for this sort of work than just that, to strike again the keynote of man's forgotten heritage, and throw down the gauntlet to those who appropriated it for their own personal benefit and power? . . .

Against the array of facts and the vast background of universal tradition, no hostile criticism and no puny fault finding on the part of narrow minds can ever prevail, or throw the slightest slur upon a work from the pages of which breathe unquestioned authority and unequivocal challenge.

—BORIS DE ZIRKOFF, Editor

## SPEAKING OUT

### "THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE"

In the summer of 1889, while living at Fontaine Bleau, France, Helena Blavatsky translated and annotated her beautiful and inspiring *The Voice of the Silence*. Its deep mystical yet altogether practical content has made it to this day the finest expression of the Heart Doctrine, the living of which is universal brotherhood, the essential basis of all theosophical doctrine. H.P.B.'s translation is from the "Book of the Golden Precepts", taken from the thirty-nine of its ninety distinct treatises, which she had learned by heart while undergoing training in Tibet.

The depth and greatness of this work has been valued and appreciated by many, from literary personalities like Tennyson and AE to eminent Buddhists and scholars like W.Y. Evans-Wentz, D. T. Suzuki, the sixth Tashi Lama, and even the psychologist William James. D. T. Suzuki, undoubtedly the greatest authority on Mahâyâna Buddhism known in the West in the twentieth century, wrote: "I saw *The Voice of the Silence* for the first time while at Oxford. I immediately got a copy and sent it to Mrs. Suzuki (then Miss Beatrice Lane, American) at Columbia University, writing to her: 'Here is the real Mahâyâna Buddhism.'" Yet despite its being 'real' Buddhism, the strange fact remains that it is still relatively unknown in the Buddhist world today, and modern Buddhists in general seem to be either critical of H.P.B. or afraid of her.

The most important and 'authoritative' endorsement of the authenticity and scholarship of H.P.B.'s *Voice* was its

publishing by The Chinese Buddhist Society in Peking in 1927, at the request of the Tashi Lama, Spiritual Head of the Gelugpa Order of Tibetan Buddhists. For it he specially wrote a sutra entitled "The Path of Liberation", which appears on the page facing the Editorial Foreword.

This unexpurgated reprint of the original edition was edited, with most valuable notes and commentary, by Alice Cleather (personal pupil of H.P.B.) and Basil Crump. Both were members of the Gelugpa Order of Tibetan Buddhism. It is interesting to note that the reason for the Tashi Lama's request for publication of the *Voice* was, as expressed by the editors, that it was "the only true exposition into English of the Heart Doctrine of the *Mahâyâna* and its noble ideal of self-sacrifice for humanity." In the light of this statement, and also the editors' remarks that "during many years of study and initiation in Tibet, H.P.B. spent a considerable time at Tashi-lhum-po, and knew the predecessor of the present Tashi Lama very well," the fictions, both ignorant and sometimes malicious, persisting about H.P.B. are inexcusable. A typical example is that of Alan Watts, who writes of "the fantasies of H. P. Blavatsky", disparagingly and inaccurately associating her name and work with authors of mere adventure stories like James Hilton and Talbot Mundy, and the fictitious reportings of "Lobsang Rampa". Watts also speaks of her "very superficial knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism", and by so speaking exposes his own profound lack of knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Theosophists and Buddhists will also be especially interested in the following (from the Cleather-Crump Editorial Foreword to the Peking edition): "All the Tibetan terms and references have been checked with the assistance of members of the Tashi Lama's suite, and our Chinese friends have also given us every assistance. It is with very great satisfaction that we publish this edition under the auspices of the Peking Buddhist Research Society, who recognize in it the highest and most sacred teachings of their own 'contemplative' schools. It was not until we came in contact with Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists that we obtained this striking confirmation of H. P. Blavatsky's work. The little book is now, therefore, reprinted with the strongest and most authoritative Tibetan and Chinese endorsement."

In the light of this, cannot now Mr. Watts and other captious critics of H.P.B. let go some of their own fantasies and accept and benefit from the depth and vision offered by H.P.B. both as a very unstuffy scholar and as a spiritual Teacher?

Another reason for this 1927 reprint requested by the Tashi Lama was that "those issued since H.P.B.'s death in 1891 contain errors and even, in some cases, deliberate alterations and omissions." (Cleather-Crump, *op. cit.*) A recent paperback, a photographic reproduction of one of these altered editions was published in 1971. Issued under a grant from the Kern Foundation as a Quest Book Miniature by The Theosophical Publishing House at Wheaton, Illinois, it contains many errors.

It must first be pointed out that the present publishers did not with conscious intent perpetuate these errors. Unfortunately, however, the edition selected by them for copying was one not checked with the original of 1889 or accurate reprints made since then, but was mistakenly thought

to be an exact and a faithful reproduction, though how this was possible for anyone even vaguely familiar with the original *Voice* is hard to imagine; for the edition now in question contains completely unwarranted changes starting with the title page and continuing to the very last page. The most flagrant omission is that part dealing with the abstruse and yet practical teaching about the Pratyeka Buddhas and their relationship to the Path of the Bodhisattvas. Left out is the following: "He, who becomes Pratyeka Buddha, makes his Obeisance but to his *Self*." (This sentence should be inserted on page 62 at the beginning of the second paragraph.) The footnote, Number 38, under "The Two Paths", is also omitted. It reads as follows: "*Pratyeka Buddhas* are those Bodhisattvas who strive after and often reach the Dharmakâya robe after a series of lives. Caring nothing for the woes of mankind or to help it, but only for their own *bliss*, they enter Nirvâna and—disappear from the sight and hearts of men. In Northern Buddhism a 'Pratyeka Buddha' is a synonym of spiritual Selfishness."

Some may say that this teaching has no practical bearing on life and that it is not important whether it is taken out or included in the text, or that it matters little what the correct interpretation is. Yet the practicality and importance of the teaching of the Two Paths, that of the Pratyeka Buddha contrasted with the Bodhisattva, is the same as the difference between the person who meditates apart from the world for his own liberation, and one who sacrifices even his highest intellectual and spiritual aspirations to share his wisdom with others.

That H.P.B. was accurate in her description of the teaching of the Pratyeka Buddha is well established today, and references supporting her can be found among the writings of such current Buddhist 'authorities' as W. Y. Evans-Wentz, Christmas Humphreys, Herbert Guenther, and many others.

Other errors in the present Quest Book edition consist mostly of changes in capitals and italics; for example: "Sweet are the fruits of rest and liberation for the sake of self; . ." (p. 62, Wheaton ed.) compared to "Sweet are the fruits of Rest and Liberation for the sake of *Self*;" (p. 43, orig. ed.) To the student the distinction in meaning between the two is obvious. There are literally hundreds of such changes. The publishers, we understand, are aware of these errors; but to leave this edition of *The Voice of the Silence* as it presently stands, and to give it wide dissemination, is unhealthy for and detrimental to the Theosophical Movement. Strong principled action is necessary, unfettered by mistakes of the past or the economics of the present; and it is hoped that the most thorough steps will be taken by the publishing house at Wheaton, and by the Kern Foundation, to correct this deformation of text. At the very least, should not errata sheets be inserted? Or, the more bold action, it would seem, and the more necessary, would be a complete withdrawal by the publishers of the whole edition. Surely throughout the Theosophical Movement there would be strong support for some constructive action.

(Verbatim reprints of the original edition of *The Voice of the Silence* can be obtained from: Theosophical University Press, P.O. Bin C., Pasadena, Calif. 91109; and from The Theosophy Company, 245 West 33rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90007.)

—KENNETH SMALL

## THE ILLOGIC OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Under this heading, *Mind of the Time Newsletter* Vol. 1, No. 3 of June 1971, issued by the United Lodge of Theosophists of Ottawa, Canada, quotes the following. It is by A. M. Kirkpatrick, writing in *Canadian Welfare*, March-April, 1971:

"The issue of abolition of the death penalty will soon become a matter for Canadian parliamentary decision as the trial period of five years comes to an end . . . The modern concept of punishment is that it is designed to secure society's protection and the rehabilitation of the offender. It is this concept that should underlie discussions about the abolition of the death penalty . . . In essence the death penalty belies all hope of regeneration of the individual and negates the very principles on which we base all education, philosophy, religion and development of civilization itself."

*Mind of the Time* comments: "Theosophy goes far beyond the above conclusions, revealing that a subjective (astral) form survives physical death. This form is the enemy of our civilization which permits us to execute men for crimes committed. At an execution the mass of passion and desire—free from the weight of the body—is thrown out into the ether, and is liable at any moment to be attracted to any sensitive person . . . Thus crimes and new ideas of crimes are wilfully propagated every day by those countries where capital punishment prevails." (Quotation is from W. Q. Judge's *The Ocean of Theosophy*. For further important comments see Supplement this issue.)

## FROM LETTERS RECEIVED

Margaret Rashbun, Parker, Ariz.—Many thanks for my shipment of *Golden Precepts*, which has turned out to be a jewel of an edition.

Alan R. Shurlock, Mill Valley, Calif.—I enjoy your valued publication very much and hope it will continue to be successful. That it will I have no doubt, as long as the high quality of the articles it has published so far continues.

Rosemary Voisse, Tibetan Friendship Center, Wynberg, C.P. South Africa.—The next leaflet we made, for the last T.F.G. meeting, bore the words "Do well the smallest duty, and when the day is done there will be no regrets, no time wasted; then joy will come." Is that from K.T.? [Yes.—Eds.]. I have about a half dozen copies of the old *Raja Yoga Messenger*, which are being carefully kept, in case it should be possible—and why not? to start a group one of these days, and also to issue a magazine for young people all over the country (this has been a latent dream for many years).

S. Hildor Barton, Porterville, Calif.—And now back to the continual problem: presentation (at any rate one's conception) of Theosophy to the often inquirers. One can begin by referring to the Objects of the Theosophical Society as originally founded: the basic ideals of brotherhood on broadest lines, and the upholding of spiritual ideals, to begin with. And from there discussion of these approaches to basic THEO-divine SOPHIA-wisdom, which no one can presume to have attained, but which is the study and the aspiration of every earnest seeker.

A belief?—to ever be spoken of as a belief? Never may it become so. Belief is the closing of a door. The radiance in the true teaching of the Buddha was the spiritual search hand-in-hand of the seeker with his fellow-seekers.

One recalls with a certain sad regret a visit to (a theosophical establishment), where on entering the hall a little girl not yet out of grammar school addressed herself to us in all the confidence of authority and launched into a positive, well buttoned-up package of Theosophy-for-the-Millions. That is, of course, one way to proceed with it—and indeed there are fish in the sea for every kind of bait, and minds for all varieties of nourishment.

But, modestly avowed, my own inclination is to follow the Socratic way of leading the inquirer through his own deductions, from his own store of thought, seeking as it were to show that many main lines of his thinking had been along basic Theosophical lines,

and bringing these strands of his own hand-wrought philosophy into the integration of the Theosophical frame, as we understand it.

[And why not, occasionally, a nostalgic memory, as this from]:

*Maja Synge, Helsingborg, Sweden.*—It happened that I was recently reading a book lent to me by an old F.T.S. containing talks and letters around the death of H.P.B. It was in Swedish translation by Madame Carin Scholander, this scholarly lady and devoted pioneer Theosophist (who had met H.P.B. in London). The signatures vouch for the fact that everyone knew H.P.B. intimately (as much as it's possible to know a mystery). They were what you would call loving tributes to a great friend and teacher by her disciples. Among the signatures is also that of medical doctor Gustav Zander, one of the founders of the T.S. in Sweden, a very noble character as I remember him from my early youth and first contact with Theosophy.

While reading the contributions, the length and style of which we in our day would find panegyric, what they say in so many words could be condensed to a few paragraphs and thus be more impressive. But such was not the style at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Nevertheless the sincerity is obvious, the sorrow and expression of profound loss genuine.

The reading evoked some glorious memories of K.T.'s visits to Sweden, her 'aura', her companions, her public appearances. Really it was royal. On one of her early visits she had G. de P. in her company. They stayed at *Gunnebo* with the Bognrens. My mother and I had the privilege of being present at an esoteric evening there. Sirén, as I recall, was there. It was then that G. de P. for the first time entered my consciousness, never to leave it.

Today, old and frail, I feel the strength and vigor in the memory of these pioneers of many nations, who gave their all. So we can, I feel, with the poet "endure certain darkness remembering light."

## "MME. BLAVATSKY DEFENDED"

The following letters received recently by the President of Point Loma Publications relate to Iverson L. Harris' book *Mme. Blavatsky Defended*, published last year. The first is from the President and Founder of The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (Los Angeles, Calif.), Manly P. Hall; the second from Miss Ianthé H. Hoskins, well known lecturer and writer, of Hextable, Kent, England.)

Dear Mr. Harris:

Many thanks for your recent letter, and it was most thoughtful and gracious of you to send me a copy of your book. I have always held Madame Blavatsky in the highest esteem, and on one or two occasions I have written articles in defense of this great theosophist. I am happy indeed to endorse the volume, and you are at liberty to quote me as in complete sympathy with the point of view presented in your book.

I will call this volume to the attention of our book department, and if they feel that we have an outlet here for the volume, they will probably place an order.

Again, thanking you for your nice letter and the book defending Madame Blavatsky, I am

Always most sincerely yours,  
Manly P. Hall  
President and Founder.

Dear Mr. Harris,

I have recently borrowed a copy of your splendid book from our Headquarters Library.

I am interested to note that you have included (on page 17) a letter that I wrote to the Daily Telegraph. As you refer to it as an 'undated news item', you might like to know that it appeared in the issue of 15 June 1968.

I had written in similar terms to four of our national dailies, modifying my letter according to the particular bits of nonsense that they had published, but the Daily Telegraph was the only paper that published my letter.

A good many years ago a leading journalist/politician wrote: "Education is the art of learning to be deceived by the printed word." One day someone with leisure could compile a list of books and encyclopaedias that completely misrepresent Theosophy: The lies that are told . . . But authors and publishers usually do not want to know. Among the worst offenders, alas, are Christian clergymen and authors. However, you may be interested to know that I was able to persuade the editor of Pears' Cyclopaedia to change the entry under 'Theosophy'—it began with the usual nonsense: 'Theosophy was founded by Mme. Blavatsky in 1875 . . .', and in the short space of 12-1/2 lines managed to include references to Mrs. Besant and Charles Bradlaugh!!! About 3 lines of the total were relevant. The new entry was composed by the editor of the Cyclopaedia, from drafts that I supplied, and although not entirely satisfactory, is at least factually accurate.

With best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,  
IANTHE H. HOSKINS

## THE PSYCHIC TIDE

By G. DE PURUCKER

We call particular attention to the appositeness of this article, written nearly forty years ago. It is reprinted from *Messages to Conventions*, pages 111-114 (now out of print), and is a Letter from the then Head of the T.S., Point Loma, addressed to the Officials and Members of the General Council of the English Section of the Society, dated April 21, 1934.—Eps.

The world is entering upon psychologic conditions far different from what existed in the time when H. P. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society; and the signs of these changing events are observable everywhere. It were sheer folly to put blinders over our eyes and to suppose that we are still living in the psychological atmosphere which prevailed more or less from 1875 to 1914.

Yet it would be equally foolish in my judgment to suppose that the declarations of cause of the founding of the Theosophical Society, which were made by the Masters and their Messenger H. P. Blavatsky, between 1875 and 1891, which was the time of her passing, have been exhausted in their necessary effects, and that these same causes no longer are valid. The exact contrary of this is the case. The Theosophical Society was formed above everything else to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions, to be a bulwark of spirituality in the world, and perhaps above everything else to bring about at least a nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood which could successfully face and in time prevail over the mistakes of the passing phases in human civilization, such as above said we today see around us on every hand. In other words, the causes for the founding of the Theosophical Society are really stronger today than they were at the time of the birth of the Society.

The Masters in their wisdom foresaw what was coming, foresaw the need of introducing into the thought-life of the world ideas, teachings, doctrines which would stem and perhaps divert into harmless flow the inrushing tide of psychism which, it was seen clearly in 1875 and before, the modern world was about to face, and perhaps the Occidental part of the modern world especially so.

How wise these warnings were that were given to us soon after H. P. Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society in 1875, should be by now appreciated by every thoughtful mind. On all sides we see new fantastic, and in some instances crazy, psychical movements springing up; strange and erratic organizations are gathering in adherents by the hundreds and in some cases by the thousands. Eminent men of Science in a few cases are even having their attention drawn to and their imagination captured by phenomenalistic occurrences which make an appeal to them precisely because they have the illusory appearance of being something tangible and real, which they suppose can be subjected to laboratory-tests.

Examine the many periodicals now in publication, some of them relatively harmless, some of them simply foolish, some of them downright dangerous; and consider the dreams of Cloud Cuckoo-Land which most of these periodicals or magazines publish. Most of them appropriate, with none or at best with little acknowledgment, more or less of the teachings which H. P. Blavatsky brought to the western world,

and misuse these teachings by way of making foundations of them upon which are created false claims concerning fraudulent initiations and equally fraudulent initiates.

It is clap-trap of this kind which is always a bait to the uninstructed, because it is these masses of the uninstructed, alas, our unenlightened brothers hungry for truth as they are, who have their attention fascinated and their adherence captured. I tell you, my Brothers, that we shall be held, and indeed are now, responsible for any slackness or failure to emphasize the purposes of the Theosophical Movement, and for our failure to do our utmost to spread abroad the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom-Religion of the gods, as they have been given us. These teachings alone will stem the present psychic tide and divert this vast mass of inchoate human psychical energy into the proper channels. This rushing psychic tide of energy takes many forms. In some it is purely psychical or psychistic, finding its outlet in the various quasi-occult or pseudo-mystical movements which flourish today. In other cases this psychical tide makes its appearance in emotional or quasi-religious forms of a revivalist character.

As I ponder the situation, I am with every day that passes more and more reminded of the conditions that prevailed in the Roman Empire just preceding the days of its social disintegration. Writers like Ammianus Marcellinus have transmitted to us descriptions of conditions prevailing in the Roman Empire at the time of its first decline and before its fall—strangely, amazingly alike unto what prevails in the world today. Multitudes running after so-called magicians, necromantic practices breaking out sporadically in all parts of that Empire, fortune-telling and other similar fads, and emotional revivalist bodies thronging both town and countryside in semi-religious frenzy!

My Brothers, precisely the same outbreaks are observable in all parts of the world today; and I call your attention to it because it is the immediate and most important problem that faces us. I do not mean to suggest that our present civilization is in the same perilous condition as was the Roman Imperium at the time of which I speak. I call your attention to the amazing similarity, and say that the same dangers threaten us now that then threatened imperial Rome. Today the chances are greater for a spiritual reaction towards sanity and safety, and I believe it will come in time . . .

In the Theosophical Society we have little to complain of as regards our fundamental law, to wit our Constitution; still less of the sublime spiritual principles that at least as an ideal govern our Theosophical activities. All studious Theosophists must have come to a realization that the only saving power, the only saving grace, in the world today, is precisely the doctrines contained in our standard Theosophical books, which likewise include the ethic which is the heart of these doctrines. It is only in matters of detail, only in particulars, only in points of administration, that we have need to be watchful and to take care lest our choice of methods be unwise. Nevertheless, if the heart be right and our minds be set to the spiritual Polar Star, as our infallible guide, the mistakes that we may make—and indeed we all make mistakes—become relatively unimportant; for mistakes can be corrected, errors in judgment can be abated;

and it at least is comforting to know that we learn from our mistakes, and that our work afterwards becomes only the stronger and the purer because from our eyes the veils have fallen . . . .

We are all human. As the old Latin proverb says, we are all apt to err, sometimes because of enthusiasm, sometimes because of the spirit of over-aggressive propaganda; but, as said above, errors can be repaired; mistakes can be righted. The only thing we must never do is to wander from the Path which lies before us; that age-old Path—quiet, small, holy, which the Seers and Sages of all the ages have pointed to as the path of safety for the Theosophical worker, and for all mankind.

### REVIEW ARTICLE

Man, Son of Man — In the Stanzas of Dzryan, by Sri Madhava Ashish, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois. 1970.

This is a companion volume to *Man, the Measure of All Things*, in which the present author collaborated with Sri Krishna Prem in developing an independent Commentary on the first section of the *Stanzas of Dzryan—Cosmogenesis*. Before Sri Krishna Prem's death in 1965, the two had worked out the general theme of the book now under review, which is a Commentary on the second half of the *Stanzas—Anthropogenesis*. Sri Madhava Ashish, in bringing this work to a successful completion, acknowledges his 'utter indebtedness' to his friend and mentor, modestly claiming 'responsibility only for where I have gone wrong.' He quotes from the introduction to the first volume: "One thing is certain: whatever truth this book may be found to contain has the same ultimate origin as the stanzas themselves, for all truth is one and comes from the same source. To that source it is offered in reverence."

It is important to note at the outset that both writers attest that it is not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing with H. P. Blavatsky's Commentary: "The symbols of occultism are such that any number of different readings may be given, each of them true in its own sphere." H.P.B.'s words, in a footnote to her own Commentary, uphold their point of view: ". . . as there are seven keys to interpretation to every symbol and allegory, that which may not fit a meaning, say from the psychological or astronomical aspect, will be found quite correct from the physical or metaphysical."

We must admit that this allows a wide latitude of interpretation, which opportunity the author accepts with no small degree of confidence: "We have used a different key from hers of the symbols and with consequently different effects." And he says further: "No matter how many mistakes we may make, we must allow ourselves freedom to range abroad, criticize, and analyze, freedom to challenge authority. An intelligent mistake is more likely to lead to increased understanding than is unintelligent acceptance of dogma—even if true."

All this is admirable from the standpoint of a student earnestly seeking truth; it is a method of study we are enjoined to follow, provided we keep an open mind towards what those more advanced than we are have to offer, lest

in our intrepid excursions into original thinking we miss the jewels of wisdom right before our eyes. But Ashish does not grant to H.P.B.'s Commentary the degree of authenticity many students accord it. He disregards or is not aware of her status in writing *The Secret Doctrine*: that of a trained occultist working in collaboration with proficient adepts of the Wisdom Doctrine; but considers her rather as one who is transmitting what she sees through her own psychic nature and which is colored thereby, and that anything coming through the agency of a human personality is 'liable to distortion'. He adds that an accurate transmission of messages from the inner worlds is extremely difficult because of the degree of intense concentration required. Exactly so; and this discipline was part of the training H.P.B. had undergone in earlier years.

Moreover, Ashish sees this lack of proficiency exemplified even in H.P.B.'s recording of the Stanzas themselves: ". . . the further we go in the stanzas the more incoherent they become, ending with a series of disconnected jottings." Also he feels that H.P.B.'s interest appeared to be flagging by the time she reached this second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, and adds that 'while fatigue may cloud the inner vision, lack of interest may obscure it altogether.' One could quote further, but the above will suffice to illustrate the author's point of view, a viewpoint unfortunately quite prevalent among some theosophists as well. Taking this stand, i.e. that the teaching is not necessarily completely reliable as rendered by H.P.B., certainly clears away many initial difficulties of interpretation: what is to the student incomprehensible can be merely brushed aside as probably not too accurate!

Thus Ashish dismisses the former existence of the now-vanished continents, such as Atlantis and Lemuria, as largely myths or 'archetypes in the collective unconscious'—in any case unessential to the main theme. And it follows that if they may be discarded, so also the teaching of the Races that inhabited them as being a misinterpretation of the symbolic (or cryptic) language of the Stanzas.

In fairness it must be said that this is no arbitrary whim on the part of the author but is based on his deep-seated conviction that "the importance of the Stanzas lies in their being a guide to man's true nature and not in their being a history of his evolution on the surface of this planet." Yet, one may ask, What does *Anthropogenesis* mean if not the history of man's evolutionary development?

There then follows a highly ingenious and original reading of the Stanzas: The 'races' represent the ascending series of forms from the mineral to man, i.e. the first 'race' is mineral; the second, plant; the third, animal; the fourth, hominid (not yet truly human); and it is not until the 'fifth race' that we become the true *Homo Sapiens*. Yet we should not consider this as a purely mechanical listing, for the author is aware, too, of the "descending hierarchy of subtle powers whose impression gives rise to ever higher forms."

A good part of the book is taken up with an elaboration of this theme; and to elicit this highly individual interpretation from the Stanzas, Ashish has found it necessary to do a considerable amount of shifting of some of the verses from one Stanza to another, and to vary the numbered sequence within a Stanza. This he does with some skill, keeping ever

before him the scheme he is working out; though he does admit that "the verses dealing with the birth of the human race have been the most difficult to set in any kind of rational order." It is no wonder that he is not entirely satisfied with his arrangement!

One important theosophical teaching emerges from a study of the charts the author has devised to clarify his theme. Erasing from our minds for a moment the use of the word 'races' for what are usually referred to as the various Kingdoms, we find that each kingdom incorporates the one(s) below it; so that at the human level we have before us a schematic representation of man as we know him today, embracing in his constitution the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms. Here is an essential key; for is not Man himself a universe? Does he not contain within his constitution *all* the Kingdoms? Though his divine nature, his Central Sun, informs and vivifies the whole, it is not yet able to manifest its splendor at our present evolutionary stage. Perhaps we can agree that Ashish has here found a key to unlock *one* of the secrets hid in the archaic Stanzas.

We note that the author's exposition puts him in the convenient position of clasping hands with the modern evolutionary theorist, who neatly explains the rise towards ever more complex forms until at a late date man appears upon the scene, emerging from the animal stock. This by-passes the inconveniences encountered when one tries to explain to the anthropologist or geologist those enormous cycles of the past when brilliant civilizations rose, flourished for a time and then fell, the records of whose glory do not exist—unless we accept the words of the Mahatma K.H. that "there may be hidden deep in the fathomless, or rather *unfathomed* ocean beds, other and far older continents whose strata have never been geologically explored" but that someday may be found to entirely upset present theories.

Attention of the reader is called, also, to an illuminating chart in *The Mahatma Letters* (No. XIV) which corroborates H.P.B.'s Commentary on the Stanzas where she describes the nature of the various Races. It is an aspect of the evolutionary history of man that cannot be overlooked. Within a circle is delineated the descending and ascending pathway of the races, from the spiritual-ethereal First Race, to the Second, which towards its end begins to lose its ethereal nature, to the Third where intellect gradually replaces spirituality, to the Fourth Race, at the midpoint of which matter and spirit are equilibrated, on to the Fifth which starts the ascent back to spirit, and so on. This, as said, is evolutionary history, pre-history if you will; and it is the enthralling and exhaustless subject of *Anthropogenesis*. If some students of our own time have romanticized and thus belittled its grandeur, that does not in any way affect the truth that is enshrined in its purity in the Stanzas themselves.

Once the elaborate charts have been thoroughly explained from many angles, Ashish reserves space for a discussion of the present Fifth Race—its tragedy as well as its spiritual potential. There are passages of psychological insight on our purblind rush for ever greater technological excellence, on the inadequacies of medical science, on our attitudes towards life and death, on the true center of memory, on the nature of psychic powers, and much more.

The last section, Part Seven—Towards Perfection, dis-

cusses the noble subject of Divine Teachers and the Doctrine of Compassion; and we meet here passages quoted from our much-loved devotional books: *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path*, *The Bhagavad-Gitâ*. We realize, as the book ends, that there has been one golden thread that had led the author on, through the thickets of his elaborate ratiocinations, to that which is closest to his heart: the search for and return to our Universal Source. In his own words: "Whatever other secrets there may be, the mystery of our being is the most profound. No other can replace that integral experience of our total being through which alone we can uncover both the mystery of our origin and the mystery of our goal." Man, Son of Man is his own creator, his own redeemer. When he reaches that goal "the reflection of the Macrocosm in the Microcosm is complete."

—HELEN TODD

## THEOSOPHY AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

By WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

The Supreme Court of the United States is now deliberating on the 'rightness' of capital punishment. The question before it is whether the state may put a man to death for his crimes without inflicting a 'cruel and unusual punishment' which is in violation of the U.S. Constitution. Various technical legal challenges have forestalled all executions in the United States since June 2, 1967. The trend of most judges has been to 'temper justice with mercy'. When confronted with capital punishment cases they are forced to ask themselves if murder by the state is any better than murder by an individual. It is possible that the Old Testament's cry of an eye-for-an-eye has had its day and will be abolished. Those readers feeling that capital punishment acts as an effective deterrent to crime should be made aware of the theosophical philosophy on the real nature of man. William Q. Judge, in this article originally published in *The Path*, Vol. X, Sept. 1895, makes this very clear.—Eds.

From ignorance of the truth about man's real nature and faculties and their action and condition after bodily death, a number of evils flow. The effect of such want of knowledge is much wider than the concerns of one or several persons. Government and administration of human justice under man-made laws will improve in proportion as there exists a greater amount of information on this all-important subject. When a wide and deep knowledge and belief in respect to the occult side of nature and of man shall have become the property of the people then may we expect a great change in the matter of capital punishment.

The killing of a human being by the authority of the state is morally wrong and also an injury to all the people; no criminal should be executed no matter what the offence. If the administration of the laws is so faulty as to permit the release of the hardened criminal before the term of his sentence has expired, that has nothing to do with the question of killing him.

Under Christianity this killing is contrary to the law supposed to have emanated from the Supreme Lawgiver. The commandment is: "Thou shalt not kill!" No exception is made for state or governments; it does not even except the animal kingdom. Under this law therefore it is not right to kill a dog, to say nothing of human beings. But the commandment has always been and still is ignored. The Theology of man is always able to argue away any regulation whatever; and the Christian nations once rioted in executions. At one time for stealing a loaf of bread or a few nails a man might be hanged. This, however, has been so altered

that death at the hands of the law is imposed for murder only—omitting some unimportant exceptions.

We can safely divide the criminals who have been or will be killed under our laws into two classes: *i.e.*, those persons who are hardened, vicious, murderous in nature; and those who are not so, but who, in a moment of passion, fear, or anger, have slain another. The last may be again divided into those who are sorry for what they did, and those who are not. But even those of the second class are not by intention enemies of Society, as are the others; they too before their execution may have their anger, resentment, desire for revenge and other feelings besides remorse, all aroused against Society which persecutes them and against those who directly take part in their trial and execution. The nature, passions, state of mind and bitterness of the criminal have, hence, to be taken into account in considering the question. For the condition which he is in when cut off from mundane life has much to do with the whole subject.

All the modes of execution are violent, whether by the knife, the sword, the bullet, by poison, rope, or electricity. And for the Theosophist the term *violent* as applied to death must mean more than it does to those who do not hold theosophical views. For the latter, a violent death is distinguished from an easy natural one solely by the violence used against the victim. But for us such a death is the violent separation of the man from his body, and is a serious matter, of interest to the whole state. It creates in fact a paradox, for such persons are not dead; they remain with us as unseen criminals, able to do harm to the living and to cause damage to the whole of Society.

What happens? All the onlooker sees is that the sudden cutting off is accomplished; but what of the reality? A natural death is like the falling of a leaf near the winter time. The time is fully ripe, all the powers of the leaf having separated; those acting no longer, its stem has but a slight hold on the branch and the slightest wind takes it away. So with us; we begin to separate our different inner powers and parts one from the other because their full term has ended, and when the final tremor comes the various inner component parts of the man fall away from each other and let the soul go free. But the poor criminal has not come to the natural end of his life. His astral body is not ready to separate from his physical body, nor is the vital, nervous energy ready to leave. The entire inner man is closely knit together, and he is the reality. I have said these parts are not ready to separate—they are in fact not able to separate because they are bound together by law and a force over which only great Nature has control.

When then the mere physical body is so treated that a sudden, premature separation from the real man is effected, he is merely dazed for a time, after which he wakes up in the atmosphere of the earth, fully a sentient living being save for the body. He sees the people, he sees and feels again the pursuit of him by the law. His passions are alive. He has become a raging fire, a mass of hate; the victim of his fellows and of his own crime. Few of us are able, even under favorable circumstances, to admit ourselves as wholly wrong and to say that punishment inflicted on us by man is right and just, and the criminal has only hate and desire for revenge.

Now if we remember that his state of mind was made worse by his trial and execution, we can see that he has become a menace to the living. Even if he be not so bad and full of revenge as said, he is himself the repository of his own deeds; he carries with him into the astral realm surrounding us the pictures of his crimes, and these are ever living creatures, as it were. In any case he is dangerous. Floating as he does in the very realm in which our mind and senses operate, he is forever coming in contact with the mind and senses of the living. More people than we suspect are nervous and sensitive. If these sensitives are touched by this invisible criminal they have injected into them at once the pictures of his crime and punishment, the vibrations from his hate, malice and revenge. Like creates like, and thus these vibrations create their like. Many a person has been impelled by some unknown force to commit crime; and that force came from such an inhabitant of our sphere.

And even with those called "sensitive" these floating criminals have an effect, arousing evil thoughts where any basis for such exists in those individuals. We cannot argue away the immense force of hate, revenge, fear, vanity, all combined. Take the case of Guiteau, who shot President Garfield. He went through many days of trial. His hate, anger and vanity were aroused to the highest pitch every day and until the last, and he died full of curses for everyone who had anything to do with his troubles. Can we be so foolish as to say that all the force that he thus generated was at once dissipated? Of course it was not. In time it will be transformed into other forces, but during the long time before that takes place the living Guiteau will float through our mind and senses carrying with him and dragging over us the awful pictures drawn and frightful passions engendered.

The Theosophist who believes in the multiple nature of man and in the complexity of his inner nature, and knows that that is governed by law and not by mere chance or by the fancy of those who prate of the need for protecting society when they do not know the right way to do it, relying only on the punitive and retaliatory Mosaic law—will oppose capital punishment. He sees it is unjust to the living, a danger to the state, and that it allows no chance whatever for any reformation of the criminal.

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