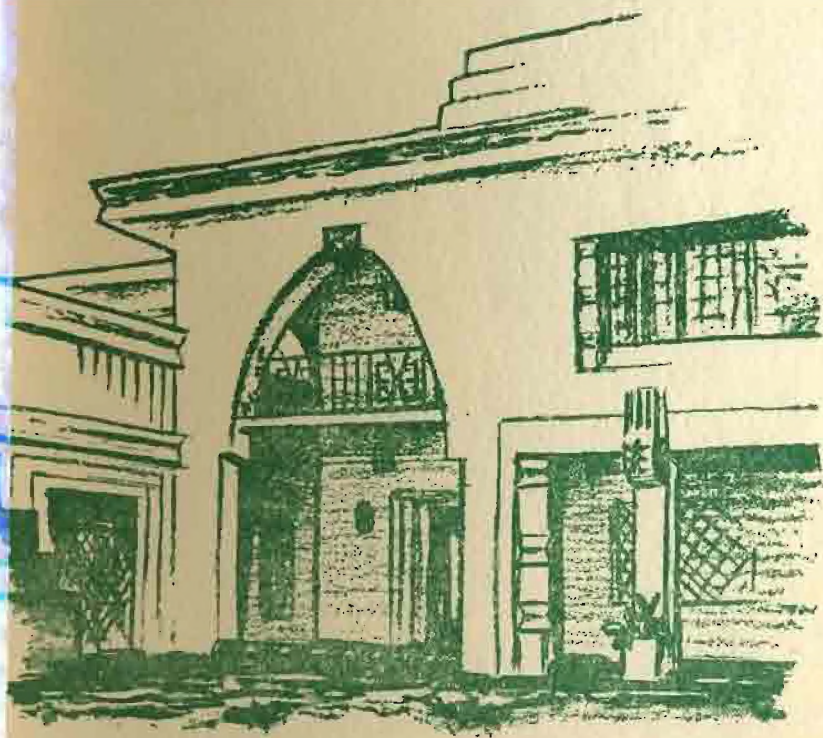


# HORIZON



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SPRING 1955

# HORIZON

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SPRING  
1955



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## HORIZON LINES AN EDITORIAL

### Of Discrimination



ON occasion, we have a minor feud with the dictionary. The word *discrimination* is a case at point. The at-hand edition of Webster uses as its first definition of discrimination: act of discriminating, or state of being discriminated. Thus we learn nothing of practical utility, and a wonderful word shrinks into insignificance. The rest of the definition adds little to the picture, for the emphasis is upon a concept of division, or

separation. Perhaps, in some minds, overtones may be sensed, but this can only occur when these overtones are already present in the mind of the student.

There is the further point that *discrimination* means to separate one thing from another, in comprehension or use, by discerning the minute differences. Perhaps *comprehension* is the invitation to larger learning in this case. To comprehend, suggests a certain inclusiveness of viewpoint involving both extensiveness and intensiveness of cognition. In philosophy, certainly, the act of discriminating has powerful ethical, cultural, and moral overtones, not clarified in the dictionary definition. We all know that it is the function of the dictionary to define usage and not essential meaning, for in many cases essential meaning remains unknown, and, at man's present stage of development, factually unknowable. It is the person who uses words who must ensoul them with his own consciousness, and arrange their patterns to meet his immediate requirements of communication.

For the truly wise, discrimination means a superior use of certain faculties, especially observation and reflection, and the cultivation of a state of mature judgment. This higher use of the mind, this choosing of the superior over the inferior in all matters affecting life and living, distinguishes the person of discrimination. There is selectivity motivated by ideals, censored by good taste, and mellowed by reflection. These considerations release the word from bondage to triviality, and restore the dynamics of its semantic impact. It becomes a word of spiritual and philosophical value, signifying a positive attainment on the level of self-improvement. It is thus that we intend to use the word—as representing a power natural to man, but adequately developed only in a comparatively small number of persons.

Discrimination originates in a natural thoughtfulness. In the course of living, we observe relative degrees of value and importance. There are numerous moments of decision in which the individual strives desperately to arrive at reasonable conclusions. This is especially true when the data available is inconclusive or conflicting. To be constantly confronted by difficult decisions is a symptom that should not be ignored. It usually means that the normal requirements of the mind have been neglected. Even more significant, it is a certain negative testimony which indicates clearly that decisions actually reached may not be valid.

A considerable part of our daily mail is concerned with matters of decision. Students and friends write in, asking us to do their thinking for them. They seem to feel that they lack those qualifications of character which they need to decide their own destinies. Naturally, we help them every way we can, and sometimes expert guidance is indicated. Often enough, however, the persons involved have shown incredibly bad judgment. They have moved from a difficulty to a disaster as the result of basic lack of discrimination. They must be taught to develop their own resources if they desire personal security. One answer a man works out for himself is worth ten supplied by a counselor. As is so often the case, the easy way is not the wise way.

Many decisions are strongly influenced by emotion. In some cases, this is good. But if the emotions themselves are not under the discipline of personal integrity, they may overwhelm the available strength of the discriminating faculty. For example, a woman formed a business association with a man who was a comparative stranger. Because of an emotional involvement, she neither checked his references, placed him under a bond suitable to the work he was doing, nor supervised his actions as she should. When he absconded with the funds she realized her own foolishness. In this case, emotional in-



volvement destroyed her judgment, for on most occasions she was both practical and efficient. From her experience she learned the importance of mental clarity. There is an old saying that opportunity makes a thief, and she certainly failed to provide her associate with the proper inducements for honesty.

For thousands of years persons in trouble have appealed to the various agencies provided by governments to arbitrate the conflicts of their citizens. Proper courts have always been available, whether under a palm tree or in a palace. The judge who presides over such cases is expected to be impartial, to consider only the facts, and to arrive at reasonable decisions, either in law or in equity. The judge should have a mind, and also a heart. He seeks not to injure, but to protect, and, through his decision, to encourage proper conduct and respect for the overtones of human law. The discriminating power in man occupies the place of this judge. Like him, it must be specially trained for its work, it must weigh all evidence, and, to a large measure, disregard opinion and hearsay. It must learn that those who plead are not always honorable; those who weep, not always honest; and those most prone to accuse another, not always in the right. The ancient figure of justice was blindfolded to signify that truth must not be influenced by appearances.

In modern society as we know it, many false values are constantly over-emphasized. We hear much more about appearances than we do about principles; we worship success without considering how it is attained. Most of all, we are swayed by personal advantage, selfishness, egotism, and propaganda. Education does not provide us with a strong central core of integrity. We buy goods because they are advertised, automobiles because of their color and styling, and feel that we require innumerable luxuries because others have them, or simply because we desire them. Such pressures do not encourage discrimination, and on those occasions when proper decisions must be made, we are totally unprepared. This is true, not only of large and lasting decisions, but of trivial things, once the habit of helplessness has been encouraged.

A man writes in, "please send me a list of the best books for me to read. I do not want to waste time on worthless volumes." How can anyone else decide a proper diet of reading for this person? What are his interests, his capacities, his problems, and his present associations? It would be much wiser for him to take the time and energy to censor his own selections. Even if he should read a wrong book, it is good for him to find that it is wrong, and why he should waste no further time with that particular author. If he lacks the discrimination to dis-

cover a good book for himself, it is doubtful if he has sufficient mental organization to comprehend what he does read. Men read great books because they are hungry for knowledge, and a man who is hungry will work for his food. Sincerity of purpose, common sense, and proper reference to standard guides of selected reading will provide the average person with sufficient information. There are exceptions to all rules, but unless the subject is exceptionally recondite, authorities few, and facilities meagre, each person has a right and privilege to energize his requirements through personal industry. This is a valuable part of learning itself, and we should not quickly deprive another of this invitation to growth.

In the religious world, there is a remarkable degree of disorientation. Well-meaning persons do not know what to believe, what church or organization to join, or what teachers to follow. This is especially important when so many of these confused folks insist that they have developed a high degree of spiritual insight. One chronic joiner wrote that he had affiliated himself with a religious organization, and after several months was becoming extremely doubtful as to its integrity. He wanted me to tell him whether this particular group was what it represented itself to be, and suitable as a vehicle for self-improvement. It is my suspicion that this man would not buy a suit of clothes without examining the label of the manufacturer, would not select a lawyer or a doctor without due care and proper inquiry, and certainly would not invest his money in some nebulous speculation. Yet, without taking any reasonable precautions, he had entrusted his spiritual life to a sect almost completely unknown to him—influenced, no doubt, by the glowing literature which it circulated. Having seen some of this literature, it seemed safe to ask this man if he would have bought oil stock presented on the same level of advertising. Just to make sure, I did ask him, and he assured me that, on the economic level, the publicity would have gone into the waste basket. Where then, was his discrimination? He was shrewd about things he understood, and utterly gullible about the unknown.

In most cases, discrimination is not as difficult as might at first appear. There are certain landmarks by which integrities can be judged, weighed, and estimated. If these landmarks are intentionally confused, this in itself invites due caution. Man lives in a reasonable world, even though at times this is not evident. Things in themselves unreasonable are seldom true or proper. We cannot allow ourselves to be locked in reactionary patterns, nor should we fear anything simply because it is new. We are entitled, however, to mental reservations, when novelty violates basic integrities. Life and the institutions that it maintains grow and unfold, but growth is orderly and



sequential, proceeding from things attained to things yet attainable. Growth does not violate itself, nor does it result from inadequate causation. We may, therefore, assume that the miraculous must be explained at least on the level of reason before it can be completely accepted.

Many persons who become unfortunately entangled in strange beliefs or notions should search for the real cause within themselves. The normal individual, well adjusted in his working and living, seldom permits himself to become associated with excessive programs of any kind. He naturally carries his spiritual convictions with dignity, and avoids groups or organizations addicted to fanatic programs. If, on the other hand, the truth seeker is in a very disturbed mental or emotional state, he will fall victim to his own frustrations, phobias, and neuroses. He may later blame others for contributing to his delinquency, but a measure of the fault is his own.

For example, a certain individual became so completely wrapped up in religious fantasy that his home and his business career were seriously threatened. He lost all sense of reality, and fell under the glamour of wishful thinking and strange doctrines. Investigation proved that the man himself was in serious need of psychological assistance. Early conditions in his home, an intensive inferiority complex, and general lack of social adjustment were the real causes of trouble. Had he not been without internal footing, his natural discrimination would have prevented the near tragedy which followed. The pattern of wrong values with which he associated himself merely released the confusion which was disturbing his own psyche. This is the basic reason for the survival of unstable religious groups.

Discrimination has other problems to solve. Consider for a moment the broad subject of modern art. We are daily shocked and disturbed by the present tendency in painting and sculpture. We are perplexed by impressionistic designs in chicken wire and plastics; we ponder the merits of some picture which appears no more than dabs and smears of vivid pigments. Our confusion is confounded by the praises of the critics, who insist that the artist had a powerful and inspired genius. We are impressed by the fact that artistry of this dubious character is hung in the principal salons and is awarded the grand prize. There seems to be only one answer—we are deficient in appreciation. Our taste in art is infantile, and we are reactionary as the most conservative academician. Perfectly willing to admit that we are not experts in the field, we still wonder how we can be so completely wrong—or are we wrong?

The Chinese, who have made generous contributions to the arts and culture of mankind, have always declined to become confused by

such problems. They say, very simply, that each individual seeks through art the satisfaction of his own soul. It is the duty of great art to teach and inspire, and a picture is a kind of window into a larger world. The problems of who painted the picture, the school to which he belonged, and the cash value of the work, are entirely secondary. Three manners of mortals look at pictures; those who have good taste, those who have bad taste, and those who have no taste at all. Each will be drawn to that which is like himself. Thus, our selection should teach us something. If we like to hang chaos on our walls it is because there is chaos within us.

It cannot be assumed that all men will appreciate great art, but it is demonstrated that as human beings improve, their tastes become more discriminating. A picture which pleased us five years ago may not please us today. In the end, we will all instinctively choose that which is superior, but it may require a long period of growth and refinement. This is proven by the increasing popularity of the works of the great masters, and the slow but inevitable disappearance of inferior products. Discrimination strengthens and matures appreciation, and the love of beauty native in the normal person ultimately dominates his environment. It is not wise to follow fashions, but to seek values, and, having found them, reflect upon the lessons that they teach.

Discrimination contributes to personal security. The man of good taste lives in a manner suitable to his inclinations and according to his needs. He is less likely to be extravagant, but he does learn that he needs beauty in his home just as surely as he needs a radio or an electric refrigerator. He becomes aware that the soul within him is sustained by beauty, strengthened by harmony, and enriched by thoughtfulness. When he spends his money, he buys first those things that fulfill his spiritual need. If this need is real, it will not be inordinate or capricious. He learns that the amount he spends is less important than the discrimination which he uses. Something that others have cast aside as worthless may have rich and deep meaning for him. Today this is often the case.

Good taste may be a valuable social and business asset. A home is more attractive, and the members of it more congenial, when it reflects those who reside therein. The stranger and the friend are subtly affected by the surroundings and furnishings of a home. If these have charm and integration, they bestow a restfulness and contentment. To live in such an environment is to go forth to the works of the day with greater courage, and to return from labor with eagerness and expectation.



Years ago I visited a little house in the East side of Los Angeles. It was an old, run-down and decrepit neighborhood, dominated by an atmosphere of frustration, disillusionment, and poverty. The house in question was tiny but neat, and the little front yard was bright with flowers, in startling contrast to the prevailing neglect. The house was the home of a Japanese itinerant gardener and his little family. They were poor and hard-working people, and it was quite an occasion that they had invited me to dinner. As I stepped through the door, I passed into an amazing fairyland. The entire interior had been transformed into a little Japanese house of wood and silk and bamboo. The master of the house told me that he had done all the work himself in the evenings or weekends, or during the rainy season when he could not work. We sat on straw mats and had our meal from a low table, served by the charming Japanese wife, whose broad smile revealed a variety of bridgework. Gracious, thoughtful, but never servile or apologetic, she moved with confidence and natural nobility in her home. There were children also; eager-faced little ones, with sparkling black eyes, well mannered, but giving no impression of being heavily disciplined. It was a real experience to share in the beauty of soul that these persons had expressed. I asked the genial host how he happened to do all these things to his house. He smiled and replied quietly, "I could do nothing else."

In this confused world, we need discrimination to determine values. Unless we find what is valuable, and serve it with a whole heart and a clear mind, we cannot experience peace of soul. We learn to choose wisely and to cling to that which is the greater good. Usually, discrimination also gives us new purposes and incentives, or strengthens those we already have. The need for avocational outlets may well be met in this way. There is less likelihood of the feeling of personal futility when we have plans and purposes and dreams and aspirations. Most of our inner living is defined by discrimination. This brings with it selectivity. We discover that we cannot do everything, and must choose that which is most possible and most purposeful. Thus also we order our conduct, and feel less inclined to excesses of any kind.

It is good if discrimination brings to us the clear realization of our need to grow, to seek wisdom, to improve our living, and to find satisfaction through sharing and giving and helping. When this experience is clarified in our own natures, we overcome most of our unreasonable doubts and fears. A person of discrimination cannot say that nothing is worthwhile, and his own life is meaningful, useful, and valuable to those who have a rich and disciplined appreciation. An ancient philosopher once said, "If you do not know what to do

next, improve yourself." This seems obvious to a few, but has not occurred to the majority of mankind. They continue to be bored, and then blame others for a colorless existence. The world has many problems and defects, but, for the really conscious human being, it can never be boring.

Discrimination is important in the public management of personal affairs, and the public concern of the community and nation. Many of the worst difficulties which afflict mankind are due to lack of good taste and common sense. When the voter goes to the polls to cast his ballot, or the fond mother attends a meeting of the Parent Teachers Association, there is need for thoughtfulness and judgment. Such positive qualities are only available if they are regularly cultivated. We cannot act foolish most of the time, and brilliant a small part of the time. If it appears that such is possible, our brilliance is likely to be foolishness in disguise.

The Bible gives a simple and practical definition of discrimination. "Weigh all things and cling unto that which is good." The weighing is not enough. Intellectuals may have abundant powers of analysis, but unless learning also impels them to cling to the good, little is accomplished. A simple rule may be helpful. Judgment nearly always develops a long-range program of conduct. It transforms the common tendency to live by plotting, into the wiser course, which is to live by planning. A solid program transforms the unknown future into an opportunity for the fulfillment of reasonable objectives. We become positive in our approach to the problem of tomorrow, and, in many cases, we can dissolve these problems before they have an opportunity to perplex us. The integrated person is no longer negative, and therefore is not a vacuum to be filled with happenings and occurrences. He causes happenings, and fashions occurrences, with a plan suitable to his needs.

It is wrong, however, to take the attitude that discrimination is merely a mental discipline. Judgment arises not from reason alone, but from a blending of several available faculties and powers. Merely to rationalize everything, and to live in an atmosphere of completely ordered mentation, is not sufficient to give the human being a full and happy life. Discrimination itself points out the necessity for ideals, dreams, hopes, aspirations, and spiritual convictions. When we properly examine ourselves, we recognize the need for a balanced spiritual-philosophical nutrition. Good judgment should make us happy and pleasant to be with. We should not convey the impression that we are moved in every action by some ponderous, invisible machinery. Discrimination becomes subconscious with us, once we have developed



a realization of its importance. We choose wisely, but also naturally and graciously. Skill should not be accompanied by the appearance of technique. There is nothing more distressing than a musician who is all technique. Discipline perfects art, but is meaningless unless it is used to advance a cause beyond itself. While it is necessary for us to learn discrimination, we must not accept the cultivation of judgment as an end in itself. Every faculty we possess should be used for the growth of the complete person. It is as unfortunate to be mentally musclebound as to be in that state physically. We must not become what David Starr Jordan once referred to as "impotent intellectuals." For a long time we have assumed that the man of thought is not a man of action. This is a fallacy. Unless thought leads to action, it has failed in its essential purpose. Discrimination does not prevent action, rather it directs activity toward useful ends.

For each individual, discrimination begins within his own sphere of living. He learns gradually to be more thoughtful, to weigh values, and to direct his energy into channels where it will be most productive of lasting good. By degrees, the human being learns that he can control himself, that he can make decisions, and that he can use what he knows, to be a better and happier person. Actually, these discoveries are pleasant surprises, and we come, in the end, to realize that we are stronger and better than we knew. We are not pawns of fate, helpless victims of common disasters; we are men and women capable of achieving, and equipped for better living than we have ever known.



### *Schoolboy Wisdom*

School teachers gather considerable misinformation while grading the papers of their students. The following choice fragments are indicative:

"Julius Caesar was renowned for his strength. He threw a bridge across the Rhine."

"Parallel straight lines are those which come together further off, but do not meet."

"An anachronism occurs when something is spoken of before it is even thought of."

"There are many eligible fish in the North Sea."

"The death of Julius Caesar was foretold by a shower of metaphors."

"Anno Domini means after death."



## The Copts

**T**HE Coptic Christians of Egypt are racially and linguistically bound to the ancient empire of the Pharaohs. The modern Egyptian is of Arabic descent, and is, by religion, a Moslem. The Copts, deriving their Christian authority from the ministry of St. Mark, had a long, if confused and uncertain, history. At the beginning of the Christian era, two distinct groups could be traced among the Egyptians. The first, and most powerful, of these groups was composed of converted Greeks and Romans. Due to the political situation, these were in a dominant position. They were the landholders, rich merchants, and officials of the government. Considering themselves as superior, culturally and intellectually, to the natives of the country, these converted pagans felt themselves well qualified to direct and control the Christian community in North Africa.

These Greeks and Romans became almost immediately involved in two powerful sects which had secured a strong foothold in Alexandria. The first of these sects was Gnosticism, which combined elements of both Eastern and Western metaphysical speculations. The Gnostics, under the powerful leadership of Basilides and Valentinus, attracted a brilliant school of mystics and theologians, but finally fell under the pressure of the rising power of Latin Christianity. The other group was composed of Neo-Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic elements, and was represented by such outstanding minds as Ammonias Saccas and Plotinus. The school of Neo-Platonism in Alexandria, though limited in size, held the allegiance of the best minds of the time. Neo-Platonism also came under the displeasure of the Latin Church and gradually retired into a condition of obscurity. Its influence, however, remained and affected the entire descent of Western philosophy.

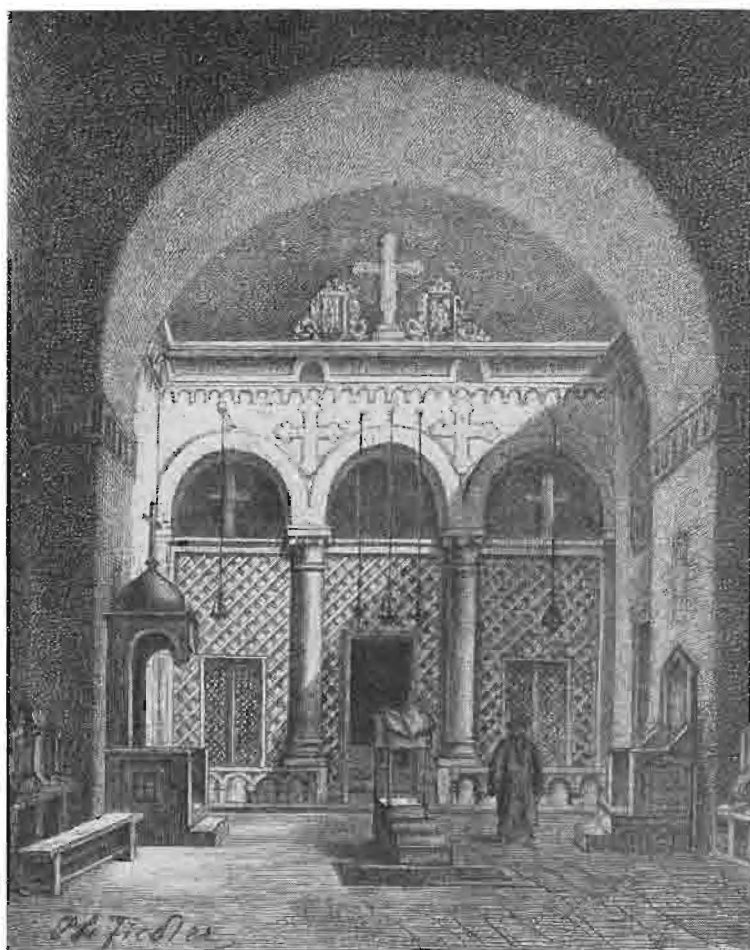
The Copts were native Egyptians, and their position was socially and politically unfavorable. They were peasants, even slaves, and neither the circumstances nor the temper of the period favored their advancement or rise as a sect. Yet, it is evident that they formed a solid part of the Egyptian Christian community. Early lists of martyrs



include persons whose names indicate that they belonged to this completely Egyptian group. The general condition of the early Copts parallels closely that of the Syrian congregation. They were for the most part unlearned and unlettered, a simple and devout people, and extremely orthodox. To them, Christianity was necessary to bestow hope and promise upon otherwise purposeless lives. It is interesting, therefore, to realize that this pious sect survived and gained considerable prominence, whereas Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism both lacked the quality of endurance. St. Augustine explained this confusing issue by pointing out that the philosophical systems dear to the hearts of the Greeks and Romans were beyond the comprehension of the masses. There was an inevitable drifting toward a simple religious conviction which appealed to the immediate problems and misfortunes of an underprivileged class.

The descent of the Coptic Church was marked with numerous difficult and even tragic happenings. Even though the Coptic patriarch Athanasius triumphed over Arius at the Council of Nicea in A. D. 325, the condition of the Copts in the following century was most unfortunate. In the 7th century, the rise of Islam became a further danger to the Coptic community. Some sought greater security by aligning themselves with the imperial church, whereas others seem to have been absorbed into the schools of Moslem mysticism. Here is another example, however, of Moslem tolerance. Gradually, the Copts came to be recognized as a quiet, peaceful, industrious, and sincere community, and were allowed many rights and privileges. By this time the Coptic group had improved cultural life and produced a number of respected teachers and intellectuals.

The Copts themselves created a situation by taking a rather arrogant attitude toward the Moslems. Both groups were locked in the ancient struggle to decide which was entitled to be designated "the true believers." As Moslemism increased in the region, the followers of the Prophet increased in temporal power, and, as might be expected, made every possible effort to convert the Egyptian Christians to the faith of Islam. Although the situation became increasingly difficult, there appears to have been no concerted effort on the part of the Moslems to extinguish the Coptic community. It would have been comparatively easy to wipe out the entire sect, but this was not done. The Copts were subjected to heavy taxation and between the 9th and 14th centuries were required to wear a distinguishing garb consisting first of a black, and later a blue turban, and also to wear a large cross. Under this pressure, many of the Copts now embraced Islam, but there are also records that some Moslems became Copts, and the picture is not too clear.



—From Ebers, *Aegypten in Bild und Wort*

#### INTERIOR OF AN EGYPTIAN COPTIC CHURCH

Until the 5th century, what was then known simply as the Church of Alexandria was second only to Rome in political importance. Among the great names associated with the Alexandrian Church should be mentioned Origen, Athanasius, and Cyril. Although Cyril in particular is remembered principally for his delinquency, he was a powerful man in his day. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the North African Church was solemnly pronounced heretical because of delicate details of doctrine. The Latin Church appointed a bishop for Alexandria, and Egypt was blessed with two ecclesiastical hierarchies with little in common. Gradually, the Coptic community retreated to the desert or to fortified towns, and remained generally aloof from both the Moslem world and Latin Christianity. By the very circumstances resulting



from their highly defensive position, the Copts became almost fanatical in the defense of their beliefs. They always favored a more or less monastic way of life, and many chose to become hermits and recluses.

It is interesting that the patriarch of the sect is not elected from among the bishops. It is an inflexible, if not canonical, rule that the head of the church must be a monk who has lived alone for many years in the desert. This policy has not been especially beneficial because it has given supreme authority to a person poorly prepared for such responsibility. The patriarch may be comparatively illiterate and without experience of leadership. This has certainly caused a tendency toward a reactionary motion within the church. In recent years, conditions have considerably improved, and the Copts are beginning to take their places in the modern world pattern. This improvement is due, in considerable measure, to the expanding sphere of British influence in Egypt. The British ended the danger of religious persecution for the pious Coptic communities in and around Old Cairo. By degrees, the Copts learned to mingle on friendly terms with the Moslems. These followers of Islam, in their turn, have become more liberal, and there is little friction resulting from the new situation. Coptic children mingle in school and play with their Moslem neighbors, and most of the old grudges have been forgotten.

It should be noted, however, that this increase in tolerance on the religious level has detracted from the solidarity of the Coptic sect. No longer forced to preserve themselves from the common enemy, and therefore deprived of their principal motivation for continuance, the Copts are less devout and tradition-bound with each passing day. By degrees, they are losing their identity and mingling with the polyglot stream of religions that flows through North Africa. While this is undoubtedly better for all concerned, it will mean the disappearance, by absorption, of one of the most picturesque sects in the history of religion.

It is from Alexandria that the patriarch of the Coptic church administers the religious destiny of the Empire of Ethiopia. The rising power of the Negus of Ethiopia may mean a strong revival of Coptic Christianity. Haile Selassie is a devoutly religious man, and each morning, before he begins the routine of his daily work, he spends a period of prayer in the private chapel of his house. He has also continued the program of the great Ethiopian emperor, Menelik, who patronized native arts, especially religious painting and the copying of ancient scriptures and their commentaries. Since World War II, the Negus has carried on a well-integrated program of education and social progress. Schools and colleges are coming into existence. Hospitals



RAMSES II. AND ST. PETER.

—From Rappoport. *History of Egypt*

Early Christians in Egypt painted the forms of saints over parts of earlier Egyptian works of art. In this example, Ramases II is caused to adore the likeness of St. Peter

are being built, and churches erected or restored. All this means that a powerful faith, founded upon the Coptic faith, is expanding at the headwater of the blue Nile. It is rumored, however, that the progressives in the Ethiopian government are meeting with resistance from the patriarch of Alexandria. He, in turn, is supported by a reactionary group in Ethiopia, and, for a time at least, exercises a considerable influence over the Negusta. There has been for some time, a desire on the part of many of the Ethiopians that their church should have its own patriarch throne at Addis Ababa. Here is further proof, from a remote area, that the world is moving; that religion must keep pace with its times, if its authority is to survive.

To students of comparative religion and related fields, the Copts are important. In the first place, they are the only surviving link between the civilization of ancient Egypt and the modern world. In the second place, a study of their language is a valuable aid to research into the spoken and written language of old Egypt. They are also in a position to make a third contribution. Through the Coptic Church has descended an ancient religious doctrine with its attendant historical, biographical, and sectarian legacy of early lore. Research into the rise of Christianity must make use of these Coptic records, and there is much promise that important manuscripts are still in existence in the scattered retreats of the Copts. Psychologically, the sect is also informative. Exposed through the centuries to numerous other beliefs,



which have become involved in its own descent, the Coptic Church is rich with symbolism, artistry, and legendry. Dedication to principles and devotion to ideals have always marked the Copt; for these integrities he is entitled to respect and admiration. Much more about his faith should be known than is presently available, for there can be no doubt that he has preserved a part of the early Christian ministry almost completely lost to the Western Church. There is a strong tendency among recent students of theology to clarify if possible, the first five centuries of Christianity. This means a new appraisal of Coptic documents and their possible bearing upon religious ideology and hagiology.

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### *The Helping-Hand Department*

The following extract from a Boston daily newspaper of 1865 reveals something of the approved method for encouraging creative genius. It all relates to early research on the telephone.

"A man about 46 years of age, giving the name of Joshua Coppersmith, has been arrested in New York for attempting to extort funds from ignorant and superstitious people by exhibiting a device which he says will convey the human voice any distance over metallic wires so that it will be heard by the listener at the other end. He calls the instrument 'telephone' which is obviously intended to imitate the word 'telegraph' and win the confidence of those who know of the success of the latter instrument without understanding the principles on which it is based. Well-informed people know that it is impossible to transmit the human voice over wires as may be done with dots and dashes and signals of the Morse Code, and that, were it possible to do so, the thing would be of no practical value. The authorities who apprehended this criminal are to be congratulated, and it is to be hoped that his punishment will be prompt and fitting, that it may serve as an example to other conscienceless schemers who enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow creatures."

*Mercury* Vol. 13, No. 1 - p. 39

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### *Advanced Lesson in Zoology*

An elderly lady preparing to travel decided to take all her pets along. She therefore inquired of the railroad clerk what the charges would be for the various animals. After looking over the small menagerie, the bewildered official issued his ultimatum in these words: "Cats is dogs, and rabbits is dogs, and so is parrots; but this here tortoise is an insect, so there ain't no charge for him."

*Punch*, 1911

# *Pythagoras: Life, Science, and Mysticism*

## PART I

BY HENRY L. DRAKE

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY

FOR over twenty-four hundred years, Pythagoras' thought has influenced the minds of men in a peculiarly potent manner. But with the coming of the modern scientific era, there was a tendency, once again, to forget him. This was a period when some relatively smug minds felt quite sure in their belief that this philosopher's doctrines had been laid to rest. But the Pythagorean tenets did not die; they were only waiting until capable and sympathetic minds would again investigate Pythagoreanism. Pythagoras' critics had overlooked that it is indeed a genius who could make such discoveries as he did. In the last decade, interest in the Pythagorean doctrines has once more been reawakened; for recent discoveries make even the more subtle views of Pythagoras entirely tenable.

His concept of life was a non-mechanistic, non-materialistic interpretation, and the modern outlook upholds such a theory. The materialistic interpretation of existence becomes extremely dubious, as matter, in its traditionally accepted form, begins to disappear, as when transformed into energy. Modern scientific phenomena require number symbols such as were considered by Pythagoras. So science today tends to support, rather than to destroy, the general import of Pythagoras' philosophy. It is, therefore, timely to reconsider the life and doctrines of this unusual man.

The earliest and best sources are not dogmatic concerning most of the specific information they present about Pythagoras. They inform us that he was the son of Mnassarchus, and was born in Samos about 575 B. C. And it may be stated with certainty that he regarded the doctrine of transmigration as valid. It is also known that he pursued scientific studies which aroused a great interest in his own time. We know too that he founded a mystical Brotherhood, whose members adopted a life regulated by religious and ethical principles.

Pythagoras probably left his native city of Samos because of the political tyranny of Polycrates. Whatever his reason for leaving, he





From a Fresco by Raphael

#### PYTHAGORAS OF SAMOS

migrated to Crotona, where he founded his Society of Learned Brothers. The school prospered and came to be dedicated to philosophic, scientific, religious, and mystical endeavors. According to one account, Pythagoras lost his life at the time of the burning of his school. Another authority reports that when his house of learning was destroyed, he left southern Italy and went to Metapontum, where he died at an advanced age. The various traditions all revere him as a saint, a worker of miracles, and a mentor of unusual wisdom. In his school, his word was regarded as authority. He was even regarded by some as a son of Apollo. In his *History of Ancient Philosophy*, H. Ritter says of him, "Whenever he appeared, a divine glory shone about him . . . . He was seen at different places at the same time; wild beasts were

obedient to his call . . . he received from Hermes the gift of recollection of his previous existence, and the power to awaken the same remembrance in others."

Pythagoras is thought by some not to have left any writings. Like most teachers who introduced a way of living, he preferred oral to written means of disseminating instruction. Information concerning him is so scanty that some historians visualize him as a gigantic personality whose specific character cannot be given precise formulation. Hence, a conservative estimate of this genius would be to regard him as a most wise and extremely ethical man who had considerable insight into philosophy and related subjects.

Beyond any doubt, Pythagoras affected many early thinkers to a notable extent. It is clear that certain of his tenets, blended with other philosophic inheritances, found expression in Plato's dialogues, while in subsequent centuries, still others were influenced. Bertrand Russell, although not in essential sympathy with Pythagoras' teachings, finds it necessary to say of him that no other man has been as influential as he was in the sphere of thought. In the writings of St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant, there is also a blending of religion and reason which follows the pattern set out by Pythagoras.

Just as others were influenced by Pythagoras, he, in turn, was affected by various traditions. Diogenes Laertius, in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, relates of Pythagoras' foreign travels. "Now he was in Egypt when Polycrates sent him a letter of introduction to Amasis; he learnt the Egyptian language, so we learn from Antiphon in his book *On Men of Outstanding Merit*, and he also journeyed among the Chaldeans and Magi. Then while in Crete he went down into the cave of Ida with Epimenides; he also entered the Egyptian sanctuaries, and was told their secret lore concerning the gods." His principle of the even and uneven tends to establish a parallel with Persian dualism. No doubt this relationship gave occasion in early times to a theory that the Magi were his teachers. George Grote in his *History of Greece* refers to him as a man whose life and actions bear witness to an original mind and not to that of a borrower—"a mind impressed both with Hellenic and with non-Hellenic habits and religion, yet capable of combining the two in a manner peculiar to himself." Thus, Pythagoras introduced a foreign mode of philosophic instruction into Hellenic culture, the source of which is probably India or Egypt, while his religious psychology is based on the Orphic mysteries. This fusion of Eastern and Western thought resulted in a new approach to life which became more significant in the centuries to come.

The influence of the East and West, amalgamated in Pythagoras' doctrine, resulted in a problem concerning his entire system of thought.



This difficulty arose as early as the fifth century B. C., and was remarked upon by Aristotle. Those who investigate his doctrines are prone to consider only one or the other of the two major aspects of his teaching. The reason for this lies in the fact that his work comprises two different systems of thought, which were developed by two branches of his school. They may best be designated as the mystical and the scientific. Ancient as well as current accounts of Pythagoreanism stress the elements of either one or the other of these methods of inquiry, not seeing that true Pythagoreanism demands a balanced blending of both. Even Pythagoras' immediate followers did not see this, although historical perspective shows it to have been the cause of the doctrinal differences which divided the school. Yet it is only when an adequate synthesis of the various elements of Pythagoras' comprehensive thinking has been achieved, that its meaning can be understood. Understanding, so far as Pythagoras is concerned, is precisely the result of comprehending the joint import of science and mysticism; for to him, they were not distinct disciplines, but separate aspects of the same discipline, namely that of understanding human nature.

Pythagoras' school, founded at Crotona, was a Brotherhood of individuals dedicated to a common purpose. And as a certain mystery surrounds the life of Pythagoras, so, too, does it obscure the purpose and specific functioning of the Brotherhood. The Order seems to have contained a membership divided into several grades, depending upon the capacity and vision of the particular student. However, the exact meaning of these divisions is not made clear in the records which remain. Whatever the real importance of the distinctions within the school, Edouard Zeller, in his *Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy*, observes that "Entrance into it was only to be obtained by a strict probation, and on condition of several years' silence. The members recognized each other by secret signs; only a certain number of them were admitted into the inner circle and initiated into the esoteric doctrines of the school; persons not belonging to the society were kept at a distance; unworthy members were excluded with contumely." What distinguishes the Pythagoreans is a particular mode of life which was supposed to bring them to an evolved state of existence by means of purified emotion and the improvement of the intellect. This does not mean that they were not practical, but rather that they used material means wisely, which is the true test of one's understanding. Hence, life for them was a serious journey—one which, for best results, required discipline and specialized training.

Aspirants wishing to enter the Society of Brothers had to spend five years in an intensive preparation of studies, including music and gymnastics, which strengthen the body against external influences, and a

daily examination of their thoughts and actions, which clears the conscience. The school allowed women to enter the Order with the same privileges as men. This attitude grew out of the Brothers' belief in the alternation of the sex of an individual in various incarnations. But they did not believe that all human beings were equal; for Nature results in their having different capacities and potentialities. The end of training at the school was to secure evidence that the universe is ruled by divine law which directs with mathematical precision. Such direction demands mind, and the only mind capable of formulating universal law was seen to be the divine intelligence itself.

The moral nature of the Order is given credence by certain stanzas of the Pythagorean *Golden Words*. They evidence the qualities which every disciple had to possess or develop as part of his discipline. "The gods immortal, as by law disposed, first venerate, and reverence the oath: then to the noble heroes, and the powers beneath the earth, do homage with just rites. Thy parents honor and thy nearest kin, and from the rest choose friends on virtue's scale. To gentle words and kindly deeds give way, nor hate thy friend for any slight offense. Bear all thou canst; for Can dwells nigh to Must. These things thus know."

There is difference of opinion as to the rules which the Order prescribed for those who, after their probation, were taken into membership. Certainly the Pythagoreans in Italy, and those who migrated elsewhere adopted different precepts. The former held to one set of rules, while the latter group, following the Orphic mysteries, had regard for different principles. These Brothers intentionally introduced an element of indefiniteness into their meanings, in order that the doctrine might be incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Thus, the Pythagoreans employed a symbolical code of expression, by means of which most of their maxims were passed on to subsequent generations.

The Pythagoreans had many rules, all of which were directed toward aiding mankind to live wisely. Some of the regulations followed by the members have also been perpetuated in the self-rule admonitions of the *Golden Words*. "What follow learn to rule: The belly first, then sleep and lust and wrath. Do nothing base with others or alone: But most of all thyself in reverence hold. Then practice justice both in deed and word, nor let thyself wax thoughtless about aught: But know that death's the common lot of all. Be not untimely wasteful of thy wealth, like vulgar men, nor yet illiberal. In all things moderation answers best." Much stress was placed upon the rule of temperance. Drunkenness was thought to be a snare for the unwieldy soul. In eating, as in drinking, no one should exceed that due proportion which becomes him. Records of the Society relate that the members



of the higher levels ate at a community table and maintained all of their personal possessions in common.

Among the more severe restrictions is supposed to have been that of celibacy. Upon being asked when one should consort with a woman, Pythagoras answered, "When you want to lose what strength you have." However, later commentators represent Pythagoras as married. One of his most brilliant disciples was the young Theano. It is possible that she wrote a biography of Pythagoras, but if it was written, it has been lost. In any event, through her capabilities, she not only gained permission to join the inner circle of students, but also won the admiration of Pythagoras himself. The result of this friendship was marriage, notwithstanding that Theano was many years younger than the master. She proved to be not only an intelligent student, but a devoted wife and loving mother. There was a daughter, and some sources add an account of two sons.

Certain admonitions recorded and interpreted by Diogenes Laertius afford an additional view of the Pythagorean regulations. The rule "Don't step over the beam of a balance," is interpreted to admonish an adherence to justice and equity. By "not eating your heart out," man is admonished not to waste his life over troubles and pains, for they are inevitable. Instead, one is expected to make progress in spite of them, regarding them as opportunities for growth. The saying, "Do not turn round when you go abroad," is probably meant to advise that upon departing this life one must not desire to live longer. Rather, the disciple was expected to understand that every happening, in accordance with the unity of universal plan, is unquestionably good.

Growing out of the experiments and disciplines of the Brothers, monism became the dominant tendency within the Society. In this they were unique among the Greeks, for the prevailing thought was predominantly polytheistic, a belief in many gods rather than in one universal directing force. They held the vast oneness of the universe to be so all-encompassing that the human mind cannot grasp its full meaning. Thus it is difficult for the individual to know what specific actions are best in relation to the universal oneness. Hence, Pythagoras recommended that in their prayers the Brothers make their supplications with the qualification, "if it is best." Their emphasis upon the importance of the number One, also evidences their monistic conviction. The power which created and maintains the universe they associated with the number One, regarding it as a supreme being, not to be separated from Deity.

The scientific and religious monism of the Pythagoreans resulted in ethical interests. Pythagoras himself hoped to effect a reform of

society. As modern thinkers well know, ethics is not to be removed from politics. This may explain the Brothers' interest in the subject, which lasted for almost one hundred years, during which time the Order served an important function in the statecraft of the cities of Magna Graecia. However, the Society's ethical speculations resulted in opinions causing them to support the Doric aristocracy. This class was later deprived of its political virility, and with its overthrow began the downfall of the Brotherhood.

The destruction of the Society commenced when Kylon, a prominent and powerful political figure of Crotona, was refused membership into the Order. In revenge, he plotted the destruction of the Brothers. These men, however, were much too powerful to be disposed of by any strategy of quick intrigue. Yet, as the result of Kylon's initial effort, after an extended period, perhaps a generation, the destruction of the Crotona Society was brought about. It came as a direct result of burning the school's meeting places by political opponents, which caused the death or dispersal of the Brothers to other places.

It is not to be presumed, however, that the group of learned Brothers established by Pythagoras in Italy was ever entirely extinguished by this disaster. For it was only then that the Pythagorean Order began to acquire fame abroad, especially in Greece. Its writings gained recognition in new countries, and important members of the Order, such as Philolaus, came into prominence.



### *The Etiquette of Chivalry*

In 1429 Jeanne d'Arc took the town of Jargeau by storm. During the battle, William Suffolk, governor of the town, was in personal combat with William Renaud at a breach in the wall. When Renaud demanded the surrender of Suffolk, the following conversation took place:

Suffolk: Are you a gentleman?

Renaud: I am.

Suffolk: But are you a knight?

Renaud: I am not.

Suffolk: Kneel then, so that I can make you one. Otherwise I can't surrender to you.

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"Talent develops itself in solitude, character in the stream of life." — GOETHE

## The Need for Internal Maturity

EACH of us is two persons in one body; a visible physical person, and an invisible psychical person. We can watch the daily changes that take place in the physical body of ourselves. We come into this world, pass through infancy, childhood, adolescence, and finally attain maturity. Then we drift through the long afternoon of living, and enjoy the quiet evening of advancing years. It is usual, therefore, to measure age by the passing of years, and to assume that when a man's body is forty years old his internal psychical self has attained the same age. Experience, that ever wise teacher, shows us, however, that the inner life of a person does not always develop at the same rate as the form that it occupies. It is quite possible for the growth of the soul to be slower or even more rapid than that of the body. Unfortunately, in most cases the growth of the psyche is slower because it does not receive the direct attention, thoughtful consideration, and patient discipline which it needs to attain its maturity.

Let us imagine for a moment that we know an individual who has reached that hypothetical point in his physical existence which is called middle life. There is a little gray in the hair, and there are fine lines forming on his face. We are certain that this man is grown up, and are likely to assume that he has come to the ripeness and mellowness bestowed by years. It is generally accepted that such a man is wiser than the young, more experienced and thoughtful, and that his advice, remarks, and opinions, have certain valuable and practical content.

But is this really true? The answer lies within the man, and we discover the facts about him by observing his conduct, and weighing the maturity of his thoughts and emotions as these are expressed in the management of his affairs. Is he kind, patient, resourceful, understanding, and tolerant? Is there an air of quiet strength that tells the depth of his reflections? Does he love the Beautiful and serve the Good? Is he sufficient to the needs of his own living? Is he still eager to learn and to grow as a human being? Is he unselfish, and ever quick to enjoy the success of others and to contribute in every way he can to the well-being of his associates? Is he free from fear, worry, and doubt? Has he noble ideals that he is seeking earnestly to serve? If in most of these qualities he reveals a satisfactory measure of accomplishment, he is a mature human being. His soul has grown up



in his body, and is releasing its qualities through that body, directing its outer conduct.

But it may well happen that this physically mature man will not even understand the meaning of our previous remarks. It has never occurred to him that the inner powers and resources of his consciousness have any purpose other than to animate his body or contribute to his material ambitions. In times of stress or trouble he is completely bewildered, and in the conduct of his daily affairs, there is no adequate plan or pattern. He drifts from the cradle to the grave, moved only by the currents and pressures of environment and impulse. Even if his efforts are rewarded by wealth or material advancement, his life is empty of true meaning. Rich or poor, this man is unhappy; but he hastens on through the years, deluged by the false hope that some fate or providence will bring him to a good end. Such a person has grown old without growing up, and within him is an adolescent soul. He has a fifty year old body, and a twelve year old psychic nature. Such a man is not sufficiently thoughtful even to regret his condition, but considers himself entirely normal.

How does it come about that humanity has advanced so far in science and education without recognizing and appreciating the need for internal maturity? Most of our troubles—individual, national, and international—originate in lack of internal character. We go along, regretting our follies and repenting our misdeeds, but making slight effort to correct the basic cause of our dilemma. With some notable exceptions, modern educational theory fills the brain with assorted knowledge, but does not unfold the ethical resources of the Soul-mind. In science, the emphasis is too largely upon things visible or tangible. While skilled craftsmen design space ships to explore the mysteries of the surrounding universe, there is little time or inclination to investigate the greater and more immediate mystery—man himself. Hypnotized by the fascination of the visible world, we have forgotten that forms are but the shadows of hidden forces, and that these forces, and not their shadows alone, must be understood if real progress is to be made in any walk of life or department of endeavor.

The adequate human being must be a well-adjusted citizen of two worlds. He must have a satisfactory existence in that physical society where his body has taken up residence. He must also have a constructive and adequate life within himself, nourishing his character from the secret sources of his own consciousness. As we peruse the morning newspaper, we are profoundly amazed at the follies and foibles of the great and the illustrious. It seems inconceivable that dignified and respected persons should reveal such poor judgment in the administration of their private and public responsibilities. On the level of states-

manship, internal immaturity is especially unfortunate, for it may lead to both individual and collective disaster.

Years ago, I was present at an assemblage of solons gathered for the purpose of advancing the collective destiny of the nation. Taken all in all, it was a rather prepossessing group, composed of serious men who had reached or passed that hypothetical middle age of life previously mentioned. A grave problem was under consideration. It was well advanced when I arrived, and had progressed slightly by the time I departed. It seems that a farmer north of the Mason and Dixon line had supplied a number of horses for the use of the army of the Republic in 1861. After a great many years had passed, and numerous legal involvements had been clarified, funds had been appropriated to pay for the horses. By that time the farmer was dead, and had apparently died without issue. For more than fifty years, no decision had been reached on the delicate matter of the payment of this bill. No one seemed to know what to do with the money, or how to get it back into the public treasury. To this momentous, world-shaking situation, some two hundred brilliant leaders devoted several days of debate and discussion with an attendant expense many times greater than the money owed for the horses. Somewhere in this confusion, there was strong evidence of internal immaturity.

There are few problems that burden us which could not be solved by greater emphasis upon the cultivation of practical philosophic insight. Philosophy is nothing more nor less than organized common sense. Plato wisely observed that man will be well governed only when leaders are enlightened. Enlightenment should not be regarded as an extraordinary attainment. We can all be better, wiser, and more useful, if we firmly resolve to attain mental and emotional maturity. Strangely enough, man does not grow physically because of any violent effort of his own will. He grows because growth is natural to his kind, and the body passes from one condition to another because it exists within a pattern of laws which decree these changes. This is true also of the inner nature of the person.

The neglected child will turn out badly and its growth will be inhibited if it does not receive proper nutrition, direction, guidance, and help. This is so obvious that society is prepared to protect the right of the child to grow and receive the care and education it requires. The person in the body is not so fortunate. It is likely to be neglected from the cradle to the grave. It is assumed that the mind and emotions will care for themselves and need neither direction nor support. Usually the internal person does desire to grow, and tries to orient itself. Its inability to accomplish its own proper place in the human compound is due to conditions beyond its immediate control. It lacks

proper nutrition; it does not receive adequate guidance, nor are its inclinations recognized and respected. On the physical plane, life supplies immediate and pressing incentives for growth and adjustment. The individual wishes to be successful and socially acceptable. He wishes to make a good living, establish a family, own a home, and be a respected member of his community. Therefore, he trains himself for a trade or profession at a considerable sacrifice of time and money.

It is different with the person in the body. Internal maturity is not recognized or generally applauded. It is neither encouraged, nor supported. Thoughtfulness is regarded as more of a liability than an asset. The mind is regarded as valuable, principally because it contributes to physical success. An old gentleman I once knew had quite an interesting philosophy of life. He used to say "I had a brother—about three years younger than I am. He died a very unhappy man at sixty-nine. I am alive and a very happy man at eighty-one. There was one important difference between us. He was a low thinker and a high liver, and everything went wrong with him. I am a simple liver and a high thinker, and have no complaints about this life, or worries about the one to come."

If we realized the importance of internal maturity for those who have passed middle life, we would cultivate it more industriously in our younger years. Man gradually passes beyond the period of his physical efficiency. One by one his attitudes change, and his ambitions are moderated. When he comes to that long afternoon of his years, he naturally inclines to a contemplative mood. He may find himself alone; his friends are drifting away; his interests and activities are curtailed; and he begins to think about the security of his retirement fund or the annuity upon which he is to depend for security. By degrees, he comes to live upon his internal resources. He lives with his memories, and finds his mental and emotional habits more and more important to his comfort. He is also drifting toward transition into another life which he does not fully understand. If he is a kindly and likeable person, he also finds a considerable sphere of usefulness. His children and his grandchildren turn to him for help and guidance, recognizing that his life has been enriched by long and practical experience.

Education should equip the human being not only for the active years of labor, but for the later years of repose. To the mature human being, old age is not a penalty, but a reward. The inner life grows richer as bodily pressures are reduced. After the sound and the fury comes the quietude and peace of what the Greeks called "the philosophic age." There is a natural increase of the intuitive and apperceptive faculties, accompanying the growth and unfoldment of the soul



An invisible world becomes inwardly visible, and increasingly real. By degrees, the focus of consciousness moves from objectivity to subjectivity, and the natural mysticism in man asserts its subtle influence. Under such conditions, the citizen of two worlds journeys happily from the lower to the higher sphere of himself. There is no real break in his consciousness as he steps across the threshold to the fact of his own immortality.

After eighty-one years of useful living, guided by the maturity of his inward nature, Plato went to sleep, with the books of Sophron under his head in place of a pillow. He had been reading when he went to sleep, and from this rest he did not awake again in this world. Shall we say of him that death was a terrible experience; a breaking of friendships or an end of familiar things? Perhaps this man was one of those whose soul reached maturity even while the body was young. Certain it is that he lived from within himself throughout his life, and was plagued by few of those fears and regrets which burden those who lack internal directive. Modern man has sufficiently advanced his culture that internal maturity is possible to him. To attain, he requires only the right desire and continuity of effort. He may not be another Plato, but he can find security and peace to the degree that he seeks them. Nor will this labor be profitless. He will be a better person, and in this fact alone is his greatest contribution to the collective security of his kind. Better persons can build a better world, for until men grow up within themselves, they must inhabit an adolescent social state, which originates in their own immaturity. No violent decisions are necessary, for violence has no place in wisdom. If we permit the soul to attain its own proper estate, it will ornament the body with all the proper graces, and as Cicero so wisely noted, "The good man is sufficient unto his present needs and meets the future with faith and a good hope."



### *Happy Hunza Valley*

Through the courtesy of our friend Dr. Joseph W. Hastings, we are able to bring the following note to our readers. "I think a good modern example of this natural way of living and eating is shown by the communities of intelligent Hindu people who occupy the Hunza valley in Northern India. They keep their land well supplied with organic fertilizer and raise all of their foods; their grains are unprocessed and unrefined, vegetables well matured and fresh, fruit fully ripened and eaten raw, and the dairy products unharmed by heating processes, and drinking water free of contamination and adulteration. These people are said to be a superior type of physical and mental humanity, and are comparatively free from the usual ailments, and they live to an old age."



## In Reply

### A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION: *Will you help to clarify religious differences in the home, and how they can be reconciled?*

ANSWER: It is sad indeed that this problem should be so prevalent in a nation, the laws of which protect the right of each citizen to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. We are forced to observe that many law-abiding citizens, who would not under any condition publicly violate the rules and regulations of their communities, are less thoughtful and less honorable in their homes and among their friends. We desire to be respected and admired by strangers, but make slight pretense to nobility of character in the management of our intimate affairs. According to Confucius, we should be even more mindful and thoughtful of those to whom we are bound by the ties of family. It was his belief that the concord within the family is the measure of public and national security. No nation is stronger or more enduring than its homes.

Religion is an emotional experience in the lives of the devout, and, for that matter, agnosticism and atheism are also emotional experiences in the lives of the undevout. When emotional intensities are strong, there is a tendency to depart from reasonable attitudes, and to indulge in excessive prejudices and conceits. Religion can make an individual a kinder and more considerate person, but, when it obsesses those naturally unstable, it can cause a great deal of trouble. We find it more difficult to endure the religious intensities of our associates than almost any other of their peculiarities. We may forgive their tastes in clothing or adornment, indulge their political whims, cater to their notions and opinions, and excuse their temperamental deficiencies.

We often find it almost impossible, however, to accept what we consider to be their religious perversities. Something more is involved than mere conventions of courtesy. The man who differs with our religion, not only insults us, but offends our God. This cannot be tolerated, and it is our religious and spiritual duty to correct him, and force him, if necessary, to revise his sacrilegious attitude. In such a case, tolerance is no longer a virtue. We must never temperize with sin or theological error. To do so would be an act of disloyalty, which might threaten our own eternal salvation. Of course, the whole superstructure of such a conviction is based upon one delicate and fallible point: we assume, without reservation, that we are right, that our faith is the true faith, and our concept of God the proper and correct definition of deity. Thus, our error is so basic that we are seldom inclined to modify our own position. Such modification would be spiritual treason.

If often happens that young persons of different religious affiliations resolve to live together, build a home, and raise a family. This is not entirely impossible, if the parties concerned are themselves liberal and willing to respect the constitutional right which bestows freedom of worship. Very often, however, as the early glamour of marriage wears off, religious differences come into focus with trying, if not desperate, results. In moments of emergency, each person seeks the consolation of his own spiritual convictions. There are such critical periods in married life, and it may well follow that personal differences will take on theological coloring, and God will become involved in what would otherwise be merely a family disagreement. This nearly always reacts adversely on children, and may deprive them of an inclination to turn to religion later in life, when a strong internal faith may be necessary. Many agnostics passed through the impressionable years of childhood in families where religious intensities were pronounced and far from charitable.

It may also happen that, during the long years of marriage, a member of a family may change his religious viewpoint or make a new affiliation, or devote himself to a deeper consideration of spiritual problems. When this occurs, the normal pattern for that particular family may be profoundly disturbed. A religious progressive in a reactionary environment may disturb the peace of mind of all concerned. If each remains adamant, the result is a kind of endurance contest. The more our beliefs are assailed, the more stubbornly we defend them, until the whole situation is completely out of hand. Many have come to me with this problem, and it is fair to say that there is no infallible remedy. Each person is right according to his own thinking, and, while he believes himself to be right, it is hardly



proper to insist that he change his ways. There is a subtle element, however, which often makes bad matters worse. We can seldom find complete satisfaction in maturing and perfecting our personal faith; we must inevitably proselyte and evangelize. We usually want to share with others doctrines which may be only partly understood by ourselves. Much religious dissension results, not from what we believe, but from our irresistible determination to force it upon others. We expect freedom of worship for ourselves, but are reluctant to grant it to those of other theological persuasions. When we demand, therefore, that others be tolerant, it might be well to observe our own conduct, and see to what degree we are granting tolerance to those around us.

Religion is too often an addiction of the mind rather than a way of life. This we do not notice, but our friends may well be perplexed when we do not personally practice what we preach. A man came to me, confused and considerably aggravated by some of his wife's religious ideas. She regarded herself as wonderfully enlightened, and was desperately desirous of converting her husband. He admitted that theological problems had never concerned him. He did not consider himself religious, but had no objections to others believing as they pleased. He wondered how it could happen that they had lived together happily until God had come into their lives by way of his wife's sudden interest in a certain sect. Since her ardent quest for things spiritual, the home had fallen to pieces, she was irritable, critical, and openly disdainful of her husband's theological indifference. She was not happier, her health was endangered, they were losing their friends, and he was developing symptoms of gastric ulcers. As a plain, simple, reasonably honest, good-hearted human being ready to admit that the involvements in religion were beyond his comprehension, the good man was at a loss, and admitted frankly that both he and his wife were seriously considering a divorce in order to restore peace of mind.

Contrast this with another man who told me that a new religious affiliation had done wonders for his family. He explained that his wife had always been somewhat negative, fearful, and prone to self-pity. Since she had become interested in religious philosophy, there was a marked improvement; she was more cheerful, companionable, and self-reliant. He said to me: "Watching the change that has come over her has made me realize that perhaps I also should interest myself in the things she is studying." Here, good example opened the door, and this is a valuable point to remember. The easiest way to assure acceptance of our ideas is to reveal their beneficent effect upon ourselves. When our friends begin to notice that we are better integrated persons, more thoughtful, easier to live with, and evidently

improved, they are less likely to misunderstand our good intentions. A faith which does not reveal itself through self-improvement has little attraction for our family or friends. If our beliefs are making us more difficult, they will be resented by those who must live with us.

I gravely doubt if religious differences should justify the breaking of a home, or, for that matter, are the real cause if the home is broken. Religion merely becomes a catalyst, a focal point for deep dissatisfactions and incompatibilities. A kindly person without intense psychic pressures will seldom become belligerent because he changes his religious allegiances. It should be remembered that a sudden interest in religion is often a symbolic statement of internal insecurity. If frustrations, neuroses, or complexes, impel us to seek spiritual consolation, it may well follow that we will carry our new face unpleasantly. We are not cured by an affiliation, we merely have a new channel through which to express ourselves. Words are changed, excuses are revised, and attitudes are re-interpreted, but their essential substance remains the same. If we are critical, we have a bad habit; but if we dress this habit in the guise of religion, it may appear as a virtue. We may gain a reputation for extraordinary zeal in saving the souls of others, but, by any name, the fact remains that we are critical, and in this regard, we have a bad disposition.

Some time ago, a middle-aged woman, who was certainly married to a most disagreeable husband, came to me. Her husband had religion in the worst sense of the word. He insisted on long and rambling prayers at the beginning of each meal; attended every activity of his church; read the Bible daily; and preserved a hypocritical appearance of piety upon all occasions. He never forgave a fault in others, and never found one in himself. The world was peopled with sinners whom it was his duty to save, with or without their permission. He had two sons, both of whom left home early to escape a disciplinarian who quoted the biblical words: "Spare the rod and spoil the child" from morning till night. In business, he was a ruthless and heartless taskmaster, clinging to the letter of everything, and crucifying the spirit. It was utterly impossible for this man to grant his wife any degree of religious freedom. She would certainly have been justified in leaving such a man, but she gradually developed a deep and wonderful philosophy of life, even in the shadow of such an environment. She said very quietly, "I have my own faith, and I have found that no one can interfere with it so long as I keep it to myself and manifest it only through kindly and considerate conduct." She did not feel herself to be especially abused, and was tolerant enough to respect even so impossible a man. Perhaps it would have been better if she had demanded more understanding from him, but she was convinced that

his disposition was her opportunity to be a bigger and better person. We do not find too many who will take such an attitude.

Those whose religious experiences have been deep and real have usually found that depth of religion brings with it a wise and gentle understanding of the spiritual needs and problems of others. They recognize that the consolations of faith cannot easily be communicated, nor should others be required to accept what we accept, or reject what we reject. It is usually the person who has gained very little as a human being from his religious affiliation who is most bigoted and unreasonable. Excessive religious attitudes should, if possible, be brought under psychological supervision. In most instances, intolerance is a sign of sickness rather than of devotion. It is more detrimental to the person himself than to those who must endure his exaggerated moods. If religion does not help us to be happy and normal, it is not good for us.

Often religious problems should be faced and solved immediately through a family council in which all interested persons express themselves honestly and directly. Unpleasantness may arise, but regardless of the outcome, this is better and more honorable than attempting to endure a situation which can well end in serious psychological damage. Long periods of defense and aggression set such complexes more and more firmly, until, in the end, there is no practical remedy. Young people of conflicting religious background should face this problem immediately, and secure help through religious counselors. If it cannot be solved before marriage, it is not likely to be solved afterwards.

Many religious groups now maintain counselors able to cope with this type of situation. Very often there is a mutual misunderstanding of what constitutes religious responsibility, or there is simply a bad habit involving basic temperament. Analytical counseling will often reveal the pressures responsible for an excessive religious attitude. If these pressures are corrected, or channeled into more constructive expression, the tension will no longer continue. Many divided families have solved their problems by alternating their attendance to places of worship. When this is possible, it frequently helps each one to appreciate the convictions of the other. In older persons, the most practical solution is to face the problem simply, honorably, and directly. Once the facts are laid on the table, the objecting one must make his own decision. Either he will grant tolerance, and respect the religious rights of his marriage partner, or he will be forced to face the realization that he is acting unpleasantly. He may often disclaim utterly the prejudices he has daily practiced, and be amazed that he is suspected of them.



Religion is involved in a certain amount of mystery, and it is a mistake to permit religious motives to remain mysterious. Arguments seldom avail, but a simple heart-to-heart talk, at a fortunately selected time, has been known to work wonders. Before you claim to be offended, be sure that you are not offending. Perhaps your religious interests have been objectionable because they have come to be identified with some unpleasant quality of your own disposition. Listen while the other person tells you why he is not inclined to accept your belief, or even wishes you to discontinue your interest or affiliation. You may learn something of great value, and realize that you are poorly representing something which is essentially noble and fine. When you have accepted your share of the responsibility, and have done so with a kindly spirit, the other person may be willing to admit certain of his own faults. Such open confession can heal wounds and bring human beings naturally well intentioned to a better and more sympathetic understanding.

If you belong to a faith which exhibits intolerance, makes unreasonable demands upon its members, or cultivates prejudices as virtues, then you must realize that you are binding yourself to a cause of constant conflict. It is the American way of life to live and let live, to share and work together, to be tolerant and patient, and to be liberal on religious matters. To violate this code, is to cause legitimate resentment in others. If they are polite, they may keep quiet, but they are not likely to wholeheartedly endorse your conduct. The religion of the future will be built upon the strengthening of understanding, and not the intensification of misunderstanding.

QUESTION: *How do you reconcile the conflict everywhere present in Nature with man's ethical concepts of kindness, friendship, and brotherly love?*

ANSWER: As we gaze out on broad plains and fertile valleys, or watch the sun sinking in the west, tinting the sky with resplendent colors, we all experience a sense of sublimity. We marvel at the beauties of the natural scene, and find a spiritual response from within ourselves. We are moved to an attitude of reverence, and, like the aboriginal red man, "see God in fire, and hear him in the winds." Yet, if we observe more closely the eternal conflict going on beneath the surface of our general observations, and we are reminded of those excellent natural history pictures recently produced by Walt Disney, we find that everywhere there is struggle between the factions of life and death. Creatures exist hazardously, living at the expense of life,

and abiding continuously in the presence of death. Are we, then, entitled to assume that peace and tranquillity are illusions, and that we must abide our allotted time in what has so often been called this "cold, cruel world?"

This brings us to a basic question. The noblest of human beings have long maintained that an ethical kind of existence, based upon friendship and cooperation, is not merely a man-made concept, but a revelation of the divine will, expressing itself through the laws of life and Nature. If such be the case, and creatures are intended to exist together in a noble comradeship of conduct, why is not this fact exemplified in the habits of the natural world? Assuming that creatures without individualized minds follow instinct, would it not be reasonable that these instincts should reflect the will of the creator for the creatures he has fashioned? Why should men keep the peace, if the jungle, the swamp, and the sluggishly moving stream, are perpetual battlefields where birds, animals, insects, and fish, survive only through strength or cunning?

Perhaps we should first ask ourselves a relevant question. What is kindness? We all face this issue somewhere along the course of living. To most persons, kindness is an emotional sympathy, an instinct to make others happy or comfortable. Too often our good intentions are selfishly motivated. It is most comforting to feel that we are someone's benefactor, and, most of all, will be so regarded. After numerous reverses and disillusionments, we begin to realize a new definition for this old familiar word. We learn that we must often seem to be cruel to be really kind. Frequently only honesty will save a situation, and honesty is seldom popular. We excuse the faults in others, and, by this negative encouragement, these faults increase and flourish. In the end, we have done our friend an ill-turn, even though we meant well. Did we really mean well? Or were we attempting to prevent a situation which might be unpleasant? Were we neglecting the responsibilities of true friendship simply because we did not want to face the consequences of honesty? Many persons in serious trouble have admitted to me that they were not properly disciplined as children. Their parents were certainly kind and indulgent, according to existing definitions; but there was no real strength when strength was needed.

As with human nature, so with universal Nature. Why are we in this world? If we are here primarily to be happy, safe, and comfortable, something is decidedly wrong with the universal pattern. We may as well say: are we here to be rich?—and then contemplate the multitude of the poor. Assuming for a moment that the universal

plan has a mind, a heart, and a soul, there must be some good and valid reason for the inconsistencies which perplex our limited understanding. Few will deny that Nature is forthright in her policies, and cannot be corrupted by human interference. It may well be that this forceful, but obvious, honesty is too much for our sympathetic sensibilities. We would like to think of Nature as a nursemaid, and find instead a stern teacher.

Some years ago, a friend of mine was a school teacher in Japan. In that country it was customary for students to request the removal of an unsatisfactory teacher. The class either absented itself from the room until the change was made, or appealed in a body, to the superintendent or principal. On one occasion, the complaint was in substance as follows: The teacher was kind, friendly, considerate, gentle, understanding, and good-natured. The students asked him to be removed because he was not sufficiently severe, and they were not convinced that he was adequately informed on his subject. They frankly feared that they would not be required to make as rapid progress as the subject would permit. They preferred a less agreeable teacher, for whom they would have greater respect. While it is not likely that this procedure would be popular in American public school systems, there is an important point involved. The young Japanese boy and girl live within a traditional pattern which inspires them to consider schooling as one of life's greatest opportunities.

In the West, we are considering life more and more in terms of creature conveniences. We are here to work a little, play as much as we can, and carry as few responsibilities as necessary. Lack of perspective, and slight interest in such solid subjects as personal improvement, have so conditioned our minds that any system of supervision, natural or man-made, is viewed with antagonism and suspicion. While these considerations do not completely explain the struggle for survival everywhere present, they may inspire us to look more deeply into the facts, with an open mind and a receptive heart.

It may also be pertinent to consider man's relationship with Nature, and his supposed kinship with the birds and the bees. The familiar theory of evolution, as embraced by scientists of the 19th century, assumes man to be the noblest of the bipeds—Plato's bird without feathers. Yet, between man and the animal kingdom, there is an interval of consciousness, the reality of which cannot be denied. There is no real justification for the assumption that man must conduct himself like an animal, even though he may have certain animal propensities. He must eat, sleep, and reproduce his kind, as animals do, but he can also think for himself, dream, aspire, and plan a personal destiny which the beasts of the field cannot do. Man is the only animal that



can conceive of a religion, worship God, unfold philosophies, and perfect sciences by the exercise of his own will. The bee may be more industrious, the ant better organized, and the herd of cattle, a more docile fraternity; but the human being excels all other known forms of life in the capacity to conceive and maintain an ethical and moral standard, inspired by insight, and maintained through the quickness of his conscience. It would not be wise, therefore, to say that man is required to pattern his morality from the anthropoid, or to regard himself as a beast in a world of beasts. We are inclined to favor the concept of Neo-Platonism that the true man is a human being in a world of animals, and the illumined man, an heroic being abiding in the sphere of mortals.

Man's concept of ethics originates within himself, and the instinct to venerate the good, the urge to grow and improve, and the desire to establish and maintain a fraternal human society are intrinsic in his own nature. Should he, then, respond to these inner inclinations which impel him to a nobler way of life, or should he deny these their full and proper expression, and be content to pattern his course of action from the example of a less evolved world around him? The answer is obvious to the thoughtful. Man, having a vision of that which is better for himself, should strive valiantly to attain the fulness of his own stature. He will not be corrupt because he knows that some others may compromise their principles. He observes the unfortunate consequences of wrong action, and is further strengthened in his resolution to live as constructively as his knowledge and capacities permit.

As his understanding of the world increases, he also comes to realize that he is responsible for many of the misfortunes which afflict him. In his ignorance and his selfishness, man violates the laws of Nature, and therefore comes under their retributational expression. Few like to be punished, even when they deserve correction, and for the foolish, the arrogant, the egotistic, and the envious, living will not be a happy span of years. Scientific knowledge has tempted the intellectual to disturb the balance of Nature and to interfere with the proper working of universal law. If we build contrary to the rules governing our kind, we cannot expect to live happily or harmoniously. Even though we may excuse our conduct, we are still responsible for the mistakes we have made.

The apparent conflict in the lower kingdoms of Nature appears to some utterly meaningless, and to others, highly purposeful. Life unfolds under the pressure of the struggle for survival. If we were comfortable and secure, we would neither grow nor improve, but would continue in a childish state of immaturity. Behind the broad program of existence, there is the powerful impulse of necessity, and Eastern

philosophers have long referred to material existence as "the cycle of necessity." In those creatures which do not yet possess the necessary internal motivations, unfoldment results from constant need. In the effort to survive, consciousness is strengthened, resources unfolded, powers and faculties sharpened and deepened, and the search for sufficiency advanced, with all reasonable rapidity. The means may sometimes appear cruel because we can only judge as spectators, and reason with imperfect faculties. If we knew more, if we understood better, we might come, in the end, to appreciate the wisdom and love which are the moving agents behind growth and progress. False standards of value cause us to misrepresent and to judge by circumstantial evidence.

We live in a universe of eternal life, yet we are obsessed by the fear of death because all things appear to die. We live in a universe of eternal wisdom, yet we are troubled because of the appearances of ignorance, superstition, and corruption. We live in a universe of eternal love, yet we are continuously perplexed by war, crime, disease, and poverty. If these negative perversions are as real as they seem to be, then certainly this mortal sphere is a chaos. Have we ever really tried to understand life, wisdom, and love, or have we been willing to assume that our imperfect definitions of these terms exhaust their potentials? If life is real, then death is only an appearance, a passing shadow, a changing of forms, and not a termination of existence. If this be true, then why do we regard change as a calamity, and death as an evidence of natural cruelty? The poet Walt Whitman honored death as a good and kindly friend, and did not consider it as a fearsome spectre interfering with the small ambitions of inconsistent mortals. By the same quality of reflection, we experience the necessity for pain and sorrow. They must come to all imperfect creatures, not as tragedies, but as invitations to grow and to experience the deeper mysteries of living. One by one, the symbols of adversity reveal their usefulness, and we are convinced that a divine providence is leading us firmly, but gently, in the way that we should go. Lessons become our teachers, and we are grateful that we live in a world which is more mindful of our needs than of our inclinations.

Some have asked why the universe, being the product of the divine will, was not perfectly fashioned in the beginning. Could not God have made man fully developed, both inwardly and outwardly? Why was the human being not created wise and good, and placed in a world peaceful and happy? The final answer is locked in the mystery of the divine consciousness, and we can approach this mystery only through the instrument of faith. Looking about us, however, we see that all things grow from their seeds, passing through infancy, youth, and

maturity, and coming finally to decrepitude. We must, then, accept growth as part of the divine will, and accept the perfect wisdom and understanding of that will. We see about us countless examples of the propriety and profit of the universal plan as it is, and operating as it does. We also observe that man does not inevitably live in a sorrowful and melancholy state. If he is honest with himself, he will remember his joys and blessings, and find them numerous and satisfying. His life can be as rich as he is willing to make it, and for each hour of pain, there are happy interludes of peace and security. He does not depend entirely upon circumstances for his peace of mind. He can, of his own free will and accord, improve himself, find useful outlets for his abilities, have friends, and be a friend. It is only when he permits himself to indulge in self-pity, criticism, and intolerance, that he burdens his living with unnecessary disasters. This is not a cold, cruel world, unless we become cold, cruel people. If this happens, we would be miserable in paradise, and could corrupt even the most harmonious universe.

There is a totality of life, a wholeness of reality, growing up through the infinite diversity of forms and appearances. It is this totality which is important, and when we experience this oneness of life, manifesting through the manyness of living things, we glimpse something of the inevitable purpose, and find this purpose good and acceptable. Until then, we doubt and wonder, but, in the fulness of time, we learn to accept and to glorify. Life is harmonious in its origin; conflicting in its midmost state; and harmonious again in its ultimate condition. Thus, we pass from harmony, through inharmony, to the final attainment of peace of soul and unity within the divine consciousness.



#### *A Word for the Clergy*

There is an old Buddhist proverb which says, "The priest who preaches a foul doctrine shall be reborn as a fungus."

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#### *By Imperial Decree*

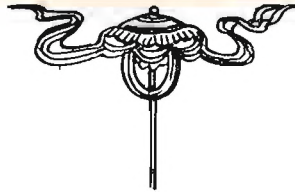
The year 47 B. C. was the longest year on record. By order of Julius Caesar, it contained 445 days. The additional days were put in to make the seasons conform as nearly as possible with the solar year.

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"In the bookkeeping of the soul, loss is classified as a gain of experience."

—HENRY FORD





## The Chinese Zodiacal Animals

BY GEORGE H. LARK

It is a well-known fact that the Orient is rich in symbolism; it is perhaps not as widely recognized, however, that this pictorial way of thinking extends to such everyday concerns as the hours, days, weeks, and so forth. For instance, if we were to think in terms of the Chinese way of reckoning time, we would get up around "Dragon o'clock," lunch about "Horse o'clock," dine at the "Hour of the Cock," and retire when the "Pig's Hour" chimed.

This use of animals for a chronological purpose did not begin until the Tartar immigration in the thirteenth century. Before that event, the Chinese means of reckoning time was in an almost hopeless confusion. In the first place, the Chinese do not make use of a seven day week, but use a sixty day cycle of five sections of twelve days each. This cycle, in turn, is a part of a sixty month cycle which, in its turn, is a division of a sixty year cycle, and so forth. This chronology, based upon the number sixty, had its origin from what the Babylonians and early Hindus called "the cycle of Jupiter," which was derived from the observations of the rotation of this planet. Though the Chinese previously knew of this sixty year cycle, it was not until the Han dynasty, around 206 B. C., that they first made it applicable to the numbering of their years, months, weeks, and days. Also during the same dynasty, the Chinese first divided the day into a period of twelve hours.

After the sixty year cycle system had been worked out, it became necessary to keep track of the years, and the emperors took it upon themselves to name each one. However, the names were not assigned in any systematic fashion, but according to the whim and fancy of each emperor. For example, one emperor would call a certain year "The Year of the Blizzard," and the next emperor might call the same year "The Year of Blessed Tranquillity." Obviously, this eventually



### CHINESE ZODIACAL FIGURES

resulted in the utmost confusion, which lasted until the Tartars introduced to the Chinese the system of using animals for chronological purposes—animals chosen to designate the years, months, days, and hours, because of the special characteristics which each represents or symbolizes.

The first animal in their zodiacal order is the Rat, emblem of timidity and meanness. His zodiacal sign is Aries, and his hours are from 11 p. m. to 1 a. m. The rat is considered an excellent diet by many of the Chinese, and for those who are fast losing their hair, his flesh is greatly in demand, for it is supposed to be a most effective hair-restorer. A further curious fact is that the Chinese believe that rats turn into quail every spring and then back again into rats around the eighth month.

The second animal is the Ox, who is the emblem of spring and agriculture. His zodiacal sign is Taurus, and his hours are from 1 a. m. to 3 a. m. Out of respect for the great work the ox does in helping the farmers plow their fields, he is seldom eaten. Each spring a clay ox is carefully made according to the current astrological and geomantic calculations, and he is called the "Spring Ox." The colors applied to this clay figure give the people a sort of graph of what to expect for the coming season. If he is painted yellow, the year will bring good crops; if red, there will be many hot dry days that will ruin the plantings; and if white, famine will surely ensue. The position of the clay ox's tail also serves as a sign post, for if it is raised, spring will be early, but if hanging down, spring will be very late.



*From the Collection of George H. Lark*

### CHINESE ZODIACAL FIGURES

Accompanying this clay ox is his driver, also made of clay, who carries a willow whip with which to beat the ox. The color and position of the driver's articles of clothing also give a forecast to the local farmers regarding planting conditions. Thus the clay ox and his driver serve as a regular farmer's almanac.

The third figure is a Tiger, the king of the wild beasts. His sign is Gemini, and his hours are from 3 a. m. to 5 a. m. It is said that this animal plans his diet according to the zodiacal system of the Chinese calendar, and maps out the country around his lair to find the appropriate victims for each period. The Chinese also believe that the soul of any person eaten by a tiger loses all courage, and must henceforth serve as a slave to the tiger.

Following the tiger comes the Hare, the emblem of longevity. His sign is Cancer, and his hours are from 5 a. m. to 7 a. m. His origin is said to have been from the vital forces of the moon. To this day, Chinese amahs tell their little wards the Buddhist legend of the hare who offered his body as a meal to some hungry people, and as a reward was placed, for all to see, on the surface of the moon.

The Dragon, next in sequence, stands for strength and goodness. His sign is Leo and his hours are from 7 a. m. to 9 a. m. He has the power of transformation and of making himself visible or invisible at will. Since he controls the powers and functions of nature, the dragon is often prayed to for rain. During the Han dynasty, the five-clawed dragon became the emblem of imperial power, and was used by the emperor and his sons of the first and second rank. Princes of the third



and fourth rank were also allowed to use the dragon symbol, but theirs could have only four claws. Lower classes of princes, and certain court officials, were permitted only a serpent-like creature as their emblem of station.

The sixth figure is a Serpent, the symbol of cunning and evil. His zodiacal sign is Virgo, and his hours are from 9 a. m. to 11 a. m. Some Chinese make pets out of serpents, and believe that elves and other small sprites have transformed themselves into this shape. Other Chinese use them for food and for various herbal remedies.

The Horse is an emblem of speed and perseverance. His sign is Libra, and his hours are from 11 a. m. to 1 p. m. The Chinese make use of different parts of the horse's body for medicinal cures. For instance, as a cure for insomnia, the skull of a horse's head is used for a pillow. A horse's heart, when dried, powdered, and taken in wine, is believed to be an excellent remedy for forgetfulness.

The Goat has the hours from 1 p. m. to 3 p. m. He symbolizes the retired life and his sign is Scorpio. It is said that this is one of the six sacrificial animals, and that, when young, it is the most perfect symbol of filial piety, for it always kneels respectfully when taking milk from its mother.

The Monkey, whose sign is Sagittarius, and whose hours are from 3 p. m. to 5 p. m., is regarded as the symbol of ugliness and trickery. He is supposed to have great control over hobgoblins, witches, and elves, and so, if prayed to and treated kindly by man, he will keep these evil spirits away and bring health and good luck.

The Cock's sign is Capricornus; his hours are from 5 p. m. to 7 p. m. He represents the warmth and life of the universe, and his crowing is supposed to be regular throughout the entire day, as well as at dawn. According to some legends, he is able to transform himself into human form at will in order to inflict good or evil upon mankind. He has five virtues ascribed to him: literary spirit, marked by the crown upon his head; a military disposition, shown by the spurs upon his feet, great courage, even when facing a larger adversary; generosity, indicated by his clucking to show hens the grain that he has scratched up; and lastly, faithfulness, since he never forgets his duties to awaken man at dawn. The cock is also used for protection purposes; a picture of a red one hung in a house or barn, will drive away the fire demon, while a white cock on the top of a coffin forces evil spirits to flee. However, in spite of all his good qualities, the cock is never eaten by the Chinese, for they believe that his flesh is injurious to man.

The Dog, under the sign of Aquarius, with the hours from 7 p. m. to 9 p. m., plays a dual role. He is depicted either as a faithful guardian and friend of man, or as a scavenger. The coming of a strange dog to a household is always a welcomed event, for it foretells the approach of great prosperity to this family. In some of the ancient imperial courts, dogs were given the official grade of "Chin Hsien"—the highest literary rank of the time, and were treated with the greatest respect. Even the consorts of these animals were given ranks corresponding to those of the wives of two-legged dignitaries. In spite of this, in certain sections of China, dogs are carefully bred and fed upon rice to fatten them for human consumption.

The last animal of this group is the Pig, whose sign is Pisces, and whose hours are from 9 p. m. to 11 p. m. The Chinese affectionately call him the "long-nosed general" and use his body for food as well as in the manufacture of numerous articles, but they also associate him with gluttony and laziness. In fact, the term "pig" is frequently used as a Chinese surname in the belief that evil spirits will not bother with a person carrying this name. His unexpected arrival in a household is viewed with the greatest alarm, for it is claimed that a pig always brings nothing but poverty and misery in his wake.

Every Chinese is well aware of the signs under which he is born, and throughout his life no great undertaking is ever commenced unless under the most favorable aspects of all animals concerned.



### *Be Still, Oh my Mind*

"I have noticed that when one is painting, one should not think. Everything then turns out better." — RAPHAEL

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"The opportunity to do mischief is found a hundred times a day, and that of doing good—but once a year." — VOLTAIRE

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### *The Hasty Suitors*

"Those that study particular sciences and neglect philosophy are like Penelope's wooers who make love to the waiting-women."  
—Aristippus

## The Philosophy of Epicurus

**E**PICURUS, Greek philosopher and founder of the Epicurean School, has been described as the last of the natural philosophers to come from Samos. This region gained philosophic distinction as the birthplace of Pythagoras. Epicurus was born about 342 B. C., and lived to his seventy-second year. According to Laetius, he was born about seven years after the death of Plato, but there is some doubt as to the exact date. As a young man, Epicurus studied with celebrated masters of the Platonic School, and Cicero mentions that he heard him speak at Samos. Epicurus began the study of philosophy in his twelfth year, but became profoundly dedicated to its principles about the time of his fourteenth birthday. Before the establishment of his school, it is reported that he followed the profession of schoolmaster, and instructed the young for a very small fee. For this he was reproached by the Stoics. He was about thirty-two years of age when he instituted his School at Mitylene, but about his thirty-seventh year, he went to Athens, where he founded the sect which bore his name. At first, he was inclined to advance the doctrine of Democritus, but later evolved a system based upon his own convictions. He is reported as the first to introduce gardens and parks within the boundaries of the city of Athens. Up to that time, it had been customary to depend upon the countryside for such pleasant scenes. He gave the name *Hortus* to these places, and it soon became fashionable for prominent citizens to maintain private gardens.

With the exception of two or three visits to Ionia, Epicurus remained in Athens for the remainder of his life. He never married, but moved in a small circle of close friends. He did not, like Pythagoras, recommend that his students share their common goods, nor did he require the sacrifice of personal ownership among his disciples. He said that such exhibitions of friendship and trust should be voluntary, and that no more should be expected of a friend than the friend himself chose to bestow. Although the term *epicurean* now implies a fastidious interest in finely prepared foods, the philosopher himself lived simply and ate only the most common and natural of diets. It should be understood, therefore, that the true Epicurean was interested primarily in feeding the mind, rather than the body. A choice of rare diet of great thoughts, noble convictions, and beautiful ideals appropriately nourished the whole person, not merely the body. The Epicurean banquets, therefore, were famous for the frugality of the fare and the elegance of the conversation. To this School, the banquet was a symposium of kindred spirits dedicated to mutual self-improvement.





—From Stanley's *The History of Philosophy*

EPICURUS

The philosophy of Epicurus was essentially an ethical system and was extended into other fields only so far as the perfection of ethics required. This philosopher was strongly concerned with two problems which he regarded as fundamental causes of human misery and misfortune. The first of these problems was the fear of the gods, and the second was the fear of death. Epicurus did not deny the existence of the divinities. He considered them of a race and kind apart, abiding remotely in a subtle kind of world, and in no way concerned with the accidents and incidents of mortal existence. These deities neither punished nor rewarded mortals, nor did they exercise any direct sovereignty over lesser creatures. If men were benefited by various acts of worship, it was because such rites were comforting to the human heart, dispelled fears, and increased the general sense of well-being. To fear the gods was to deny the goodness of the universe, and all veneration based upon fear brought discomfort to the soul and troubled the spirit.

The fear of death was for Epicurus a human delusion. He did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and therefore there was no punishment for the dead, regardless of their conduct. The purpose of ethics was to cause the individual to regulate his conduct during his earthly lifetime in such a manner that he could live without fear, pain, or misery. The rewards for wisdom were immediate, contributing to both private and public good. The philosopher practiced what he preached. He was never of robust constitution, and for many years his health was of the gravest concern to his faithful disciples. His last illness was long and painful, and he was in extreme misery for fourteen days. At the end of this time, he died while discoursing with his disciples. Even at the end, he felt no need to revise his opinions on the subject of immortality. He was content that his soul would be returned to the elementary substances from which it was derived.

A summary of the doctrine of Epicurus may be useful at this point. He believed that the universal fabric consists of two natures, one of which he called bodies, and the other space. All bodies exist within space, otherwise they could not have motion. Bodies, in turn, are composed of minute indestructible units called atoms. These are unchangeable, and when compounds are dissolved these atoms remain, for if they were destroyed there would be only space or void. As nothing comes from nothing, void cannot produce bodies; therefore, both must be eternal.

The number of bodies (atoms) is infinite, and the extent of space is likewise infinite. Within this infinite diffusion, atoms in perpetual motion meet, remain for a time in association, and then separate. These atoms are of various sizes and shapes, but so small that they are not visible to the human eye. Their shapes are numerous, but not infinite,

and through their various relationships composite bodies, visible to man, are produced and sustained. All visible forms must be mortal, because the atoms composing them will ultimately be dissociated.

The soul is a kind of body essentially material, composed of minute atoms, and therefore susceptible of dissolution. There are two kinds of compound bodies. Some, by their very nature, are able to endure of themselves, the atoms composing them being held together in a compound. There are other bodies which cannot maintain the unity of their own parts unless they are enclosed or contained within another body or vessel. The soul is of this latter kind, for it has no separate existence except while it is contained within a body. It permeates the entire body, bestowing upon it sensation and the numerous functions which bear witness to an inherent life. When the physical compound is dissolved, the soul atoms are also dissipated; when this separation occurs, the body loses all sensation.

In his *Ethics*, Epicurus declares that man judges good and evil through the soul; that, therefore, sensation is the instrument by which all values must be measured. Substantially, pleasure is the proper end for living, but it should not be interpreted on the level of indulgence. Pleasure is peace of mind, contentment, faith, and security, and judgment concerning it is highly individual. The philosophical life leads to true pleasure, because it moderates all excess, and brings the disciple to peace and quietude. It may happen that in the quest for pleasure we discover that some things immediately pleasant lead ultimately to discomfort. These must be rejected. It is pleasant to borrow money, but it may become unpleasant to repay this honest debt; therefore, it is better to live within one's means. It may be pleasant to receive the applause of the populace, but to do so may lead, in the end, to public ridicule and censure; therefore, it is better to live inconspicuously and modestly. It may be pleasant to overindulge in food or drink, but afterward the body sickens and the health is impaired; so frugality is the wiser course.

There are many kinds of pleasure, but that which must be attained at the expense of another's welfare will disturb the conscience and open the individual to retaliations. Also, some pleasures are more enduring than others by their own natures and qualities. Such arts as music, painting, and sculpturing bring satisfaction to both the artist and the beholder for a long time. Yet it may even happen that the choicest of pleasures may gradually pall, and through surfeit be no longer congenial. The search for wisdom is endless, and therefore its pleasures are perpetually renewed. It deprives no one and in no way transgresses the rights natural to man. To be wise, therefore, is to live moderately, enjoy temperance, and thus cater to a mature instinct for



comfort. The final definition of pleasure, according to Epicurus, is almost Buddhistic: "Pleasure is the absence of pain."

All evil, discord, inharmony, and intemperance end in pain. If pain is inevitable, it must be endured, but it is more terrible when the heart and mind are unsettled. If pleasure is not possible, then fortitude should be cultivated. This will prevent us from afflicting the lives of others and reducing pleasure for them. One of the great pleasures which man can enjoy is that of giving pleasure to another. This he does by contributing to the well-being and internal contentment of his friends. If we encourage others in strife, disturb their minds with our opinions, trouble their natural optimism, or infect them with doubts and fears, we not only interfere with their happiness, but discover in the end that we have injured our own contentment.

It is a great pleasure for those of kindred spirits to gather and share their thoughts, dreams, and noblest aspirations. Such comradeship increases the delight of every festive occasion, and makes even the simplest meal more distinguished than a banquet. To enjoy such pleasure, one must refrain from excess of food or drink, for the mind and sensations are neither keen nor alert when drugged with dissipation. The better part of the meal is the witty conversation, the exchange of choice aphorisms, and the account of things heard and seen. If, however, disputation arises and some are offended, the pleasure of the meeting is reduced. Our own pleasures, therefore, depend upon self-control, patience, charity, and tolerance. Lacking these virtues in ourselves, we are disturbed by the words and actions of others and no longer experience pleasure.

The opinions of Epicurus may seem remarkable to thoughtful persons of today. He lived a noble life without the consolation of a belief in the survival of human consciousness. From his conduct, we come to realize that ethical concepts can be totally divided from mystical or metaphysical speculations. We know from experience that even in the broad field of philosophy minds can become limited, rejecting one part of learning even as they embrace another part. Materialism today strives for ethics without religious overtones, and as a consequence, attains only an imperfect end. If atoms can reveal an infinite mind as the source of life, they can also conceal that mind. Unless in his own heart the individual experiences a religious fact at the root of his being, this equation will be missing from all his observations and reflections. The test of time has demonstrated that idealists, deeply convinced of a life beyond the grave, have contributed more to the essential progress of human society than those lacking the sustaining power of this conviction. It is good and useful, however, to contemplate the workings of human consciousness as it is revealed through outstanding examples of ability and integrity.



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# Happenings at Headquarters

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## A WORD OF SINCERE APPRECIATION

There have been many and diversified activities at headquarters since the launching of the Building and Budget Program honoring Mr. Hall's many years of service. A dedicated group of friends and workers have been regularly interviewing interested persons who wish to make pledges. A truly wonderful spirit of comradeship and devotion has distinguished the regular gatherings of these volunteer workers. Many have commented on the campaign as an unforgettable spiritual experience, and have expressed gratitude for the privilege of serving together a cause dear to their hearts.

Los Angeles is a large and scattered community, and our volunteer workers have traveled many miles through both the city and its suburbs. With untiring enthusiasm, they have placed the needs of the Society above their other personal activities, even neglecting business and sacrificing weekends and holidays. Several have stated their feelings by saying, "I love every moment of this work, and have met many fine and interesting people."

After the business of the evening meetings has been completed, there is always a pause for refreshment. A charming feast is spread in the bookbindery of the Society with its assortment of machinery, stacks of paper, equipment, and the inevitable odds and ends peculiar to such a region. The repast takes the form of a buffet with cakes, cookies, delectable pies, and choice h'ors d'oeuvres. Many are home-made; some from rare and cherished recipes. Informal discussion around the coffee-pot includes many subjects—from the merits of the lemon-meringue pie to Einstein's theory of relativity and the possible date for breaking ground for our new auditorium. There have been brief discussions by Mr. Drake, the chairman of the program, and Mr. Hall often drops in to add a word or two and to express his appreciation for both the program and the refreshments. Through these meetings, the friends of the Society have come to know each other more intimately and share more directly in the plans and dreams of the work as a whole.

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### *Correction please*

In the last issue of HORIZON there was a note that while in Oakland Mr. Hall had spoken for St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Unfortu-

nately, there was a mistake in Apostles; Mr. Hall spoke for St. Peter's Episcopal Church as the guest of Dr. Lewis Gottschall. We sincerely regret this error.

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Mr. Hall flew to San Francisco for his annual lecture before the Masonic Research Group, of which he is the Knight Patron. He summarized the year's work of the group under the general subject "Religion and Freemasonry."

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It was mentioned in our last issue that Mr. Hall was exhibiting a part of his stamp collection dealing with the early postal history of India and its Native States. It can now be added that he received the Grand Award for his exhibit, and also the Annual Research Award. He is polishing his handsome trophy with pardonable pride.

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On Thursday, January 6th, Mr. Hall spoke in Santa Barbara as the guest of Reverend Donald Curtis, D. D., pastor of the Church of Religious Science. Mr. Hall had not spoken in Santa Barbara for many years. It was a most pleasant opportunity to make new friends and renew old friendships. The lecture was most successful.

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On January 16th, Mr. Hall made his first trip to New York in nine years. He flew non-stop on one of the new DC-7's, and crossed the country in slightly over 6 hours, averaging nearly 450 miles an hour. In New York, he spoke at Town Hall as the guest of Dr. Raymond Barker from the First Church of Religious Science. Town Hall was completely sold out, including standing room, and many were turned away. Friends came from Albany, Buffalo, Vermont, and Maine.

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MR. HALL WILL SPEAK AGAIN IN NEW YORK AT  
T O W N   H A L L   ON MONDAY EVE., APRIL 25, AT 8 P. M.

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## Local Study Group Activities

Many enthusiastic reports are coming in to headquarters from the leaders and members of the Local Study Groups, sponsored by The Philosophical Research Society. Sincere students are really enjoying the opportunities for group discussion, self-expression, and constructive social contacts. It is not always easy for thoughtful persons to find congenial acquaintances and to exchange ideas on a mature level. We cordially invite our friends throughout the country to send for information and outlines of procedure so that they can form such groups in their communities.

The future of American education depends upon the will of the people. It is one thing to feel that the materialistic system of training is inadequate, and quite another thing to recognize the personal challenge to growth through individual effort. Those who desire to learn can always attain their ends if they will unite their resources and work together under a suitable program. Time devoted to Local Study Group activity results in many practical and useful consequences. To think better is to live better, to be happier and more secure, to be better adjusted and more resourceful.

Even though these group activities have been functioning only a short time, word has come to us that the members are enjoying healthier and happier living. Several have said simply and earnestly that the meetings have opened for them a new and better way of life. It is always easier to study with others than to plod along alone. Most of all, we think best and draw most upon our own resources when we are called upon to express our convictions clearly and plainly for the benefit of others. As a by-product of the study group program, the member gains poise, clarity of self-expression, and the ability to organize his own thinking. He has many opportunities to apply these talents in the management of his daily affairs.

We are happy to say that a new group is forming in Pasadena, under the leadership of Mr. Bennett Preble. He has attended our seminars at headquarters, and is well equipped to lead the new group. Those interested are invited to communicate with him at the address given in the list of Local Study Groups on the next page. We wish Mr. Preble and his group all success.

The following questions, based on material in this issue of HORIZON, will be useful to Study Groups, and are also recommended to readers in general for research and contemplation.

ARTICLE: *OF DISCRIMINATION* — BY MANLY P. HALL

1. Recognizing that the dictionary definition of 'discrimination' is inadequate on a philosophical level, how would you briefly define the word?

2. Discrimination begins as a natural thoughtfulness, and is strengthened through experience. How would you use discrimination in selecting a business associate, choosing new employment, or planning a personal program of education?

3. Based upon the use of the power of discrimination, what would you consider to be the three most essential concepts in the building of a personal philosophy of life?

ARTICLE: *PYTHAGORAS: LIFE, SCIENCE, AND MYSTICISM*

BY HENRY L. DRAKE

1. It is said that Pythagoras introduced a new kind of philosophy to Hellenic culture. From what sources was Pythagoras' philosophy derived?

2. The article states that a problem in the Pythagorean system of thought arose from the fact that the two branches of the Pythagorean School each developed its own separate philosophical approach. What are the two approaches referred to? What appears to you to be the essential difference, if any, between the two approaches?

3. The Pythagorean Order was high-principled in both morality and ethics, as evidenced by the admonitions in the *Golden Words*. Discuss the passage from the *Golden Words* on p. 20 beginning "The gods immortal . . . ." How would you interpret the line "Bear all thou canst; for Can dwells nigh to Must."?

STUDY GROUPS

L. EDWIN CASE — 8421 WOODMAN AVE., VAN NUYS, CALIF.

RALPH F. CUSHMAN — 5622 LAUREL CANYON BLVD., NORTH HOLLYWOOD.

ELAINE DE VORE — 3937 WAWONA ST., LOS ANGELES 65, CALIF.

MARGARET A. DOBSON—504 S. LAFAYETTE PARK PL., LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

JOHN C. GILBERT — 15 N. W. 12TH AVE., MIAMI 36, FLORIDA.

HELEN M. JOHNSON — 1105 SIXTH ST., HERMOSA BEACH, CALIF.

WILFRED F. ROSENBERG — 318 BLUE BONNET BLVD., SAN ANTONIO 9, TEX.

MRS. NELLIE VON BEHREN—1020 PAULINE ST., NEW ORLEANS, LA.

BENNETT PREBLE—451 S. MICHILLINDA AVE., PASADENA 10 (East Pasadena)

P. R. S. HEADQUARTERS GROUP — L. EDWIN CASE.



—From King's *The Gnostics & Their Remains*

ABRAXAS RIDING IN THE SUN CHARIOT  
Intaglio in green jasper, showing the deity  
as the embodiment of solar power.

## The Symbolism of Gnostic Gems

THE recent discovery of a library of Gnostic manuscripts in Egypt has focused the attention of scholars upon this obscure sect, and its influence upon early Christianity. It therefore seems timely to point out a phase of this research and extend the labors of C. W. King, who made a diligent survey of Gnostic gems in his rare and scholarly work *The Gnostics and Their Remains*. King was deeply impressed by the remarkable Talismanic jewels inscribed with symbols of the Gnosis, and dating from the 1st to 4th centuries of the Christian era. Many examples of these stones are in the private cabinets and public museums of Europe, but, as yet, the majority of them have not been properly studied. It has been pointed out that Gnostic symbolism was so widely diffused and so generally assimilated that its devices and emblems occur, sometimes considerably modified, on most of the engraved gems of the period. Roman military campaigns, extending into various and remote parts of the world, resulted in a scattering of Gnostic jewels throughout the continent and England. The legionnaires evidently wore these talismans as protective charms.

As King has pointed out in his *Antique Gems and Rings*, the citizens of Rome had slight taste for meaningless adornment. They chose, rather, to combine ornamentation with utility, and favored jewelry that had mystical or magical properties. Their taste was consistent with the spirit of the time. The Roman empire was a polyglot of nations, held together by a strong military and economic policy. The central government was not inclined to interfere with the religious beliefs or philosophical systems of the regions which it conquered. It was only when the priests and scholars of various sects and cults became involved in political conspiracy that freedom of worship was restricted, or the free practice of belief was prohibited. If the



gods of strangers paid their taxes promptly, through their appointed priesthood, Rome was content.

The genuine Abraxas gems now in public and private collections present certain features which suggest a brief summary of the materials used and the method of incising. Although the lapidaries of the period were skilful in the art of cutting intagli, few of the genuine Gnostic stones evidence a high degree of craftsmanship. Materials vary, including dark green jasper from Egypt, often mottled with yellow or red; plasma, a variety of quartz—green and faintly translucent; and passing into common calcedony, and the more or less magnetic hematite, which is an important ore in iron. Finished products of this last material appear to be cut in polished steel. Examples vary in size and shape, but the majority are oval—from three-quarters of an inch to an inch and a half in their longest dimension. The thickness is from one-sixteenth of an inch to approximately one-quarter of an inch. Most of the stones are decorated only on one surface, but occasionally the sides are inscribed and there are figures or combinations of letters on the reverse.

An example of Abraxoid in my personal collection is roughly square and appears to be cut in basalt. It is considerably larger and thicker and assumes the proportions of a small tablet. The Abraxas figure is deeply cut into the obverse surface, and the Egyptian deity, Harpocrates, with his finger to his lips, is similarly cut into the reverse. This stone would not have been suitable to be set into a ring. It might have been part of a pectoral, or perhaps it was used as a seal. Gnostic inscriptions occur in scaraboid form, and there are cases where earlier jewels have been re-engraved, or Gnostic symbols added. It is evident from the workmanship and symbolism that most of the Abraxas gems originated in the area around and including Alexandria, the famous center of late Egyptian culture. At this time, the glyphic art of Egypt was declining, and it practically ceased after the fall of the Western Empire. The decadence of scholarship is evident from the inscriptions on the gems, many of which are undecipherable. The spelling and grammar are described by one authority as simply "barbaric."

Although the engraving on the Abraxoids may seem rather skilful, careful examination under a magnifying glass indicates that it was done by means of a coarse wheel, by a method commonly used in Persia at an earlier date. This method is identified with what is called the Sassanian stamp. We shall learn that Abraxoids and other Gnostic gems were copied and reproduced at a later period. They became so closely associated with astrology, magic, and the Cabala, that it was customary to find them among the paraphernalia of magicians and sorcerers for several hundred years. Delvers into the portents of the stars were

generally referred to as Chaldeans, regardless of their actual race or nation. These Chaldeans favored Gnostic rings cut in crystal, a material not used by the votaries of the original sect. There are many fine and beautiful gems of Gnostic style in existence, but careful research shows that they originated in the Cinquecento school, which flourished during the period of the Italian Renaissance between 1500 and 1600 A. D., and is especially remembered for its revival of classical arts. In some areas the Renaissance was accompanied by a strong revival of interest in mysticism and higher philosophical speculation. Talismanic gems came into vogue and were worn by persons in all stations of life. Needless to say, the original meaning of the symbols did not descend with the figures themselves, which were more or less faithfully copied, according to the taste of the designer, or the requirements of the purchaser. In estimating Abraxoids, therefore, crudeness may be accepted as a good sign of both authenticity and antiquity.

The Gnostics were a comparatively small sect, and by force of necessity were inclined to secrecy. It is unreasonable therefore, to assume that all of the stones bearing their symbols originated within the school itself. They held to the belief of divine intervention in the affairs of men. They practiced magical healing, and may have supplied charms to non-members as part of their religious or magical services. There is some indication of fraternization with other Christian or semi-Christian sects, and with the surviving Egyptian priesthood. In describing the Abraxas figure, Bellermann writes: "They used it as a *Teacher* in doctrine, in obedience to whom they directed their transcendental researches and mystic instruction; as a *Token* and a *Password* amongst the initiated, to show that they belonged to the same fraternity; as an *Amulet* and a *Talisman*, and lastly as a *Seal* to their documents."

In some instances it appears that the stones were originally set in a swivel type of mounting, so that either face could be exposed at will. There are examples which could have been mounted with the inscribed surface inward for purposes of secrecy. There is also a class, usually of irregular shape, with a hole in the center of the principal surface, and evidently intended to be worn around the neck at the end of a cord. Like the Egyptian scarab, they could be carried in the most convenient form and according to taste and circumstances. The mingling of Gnostic, pre-Gnostic, and post-Gnostic symbols is so confused that it is difficult to determine the boundaries of usage. When there are large inscriptions, they often include prayers or invocations for the protection of the wearer. In such cases, we must suspect that they had purposes beyond identification of membership, and there is nothing to show that the original owner was even a member of the group. Several



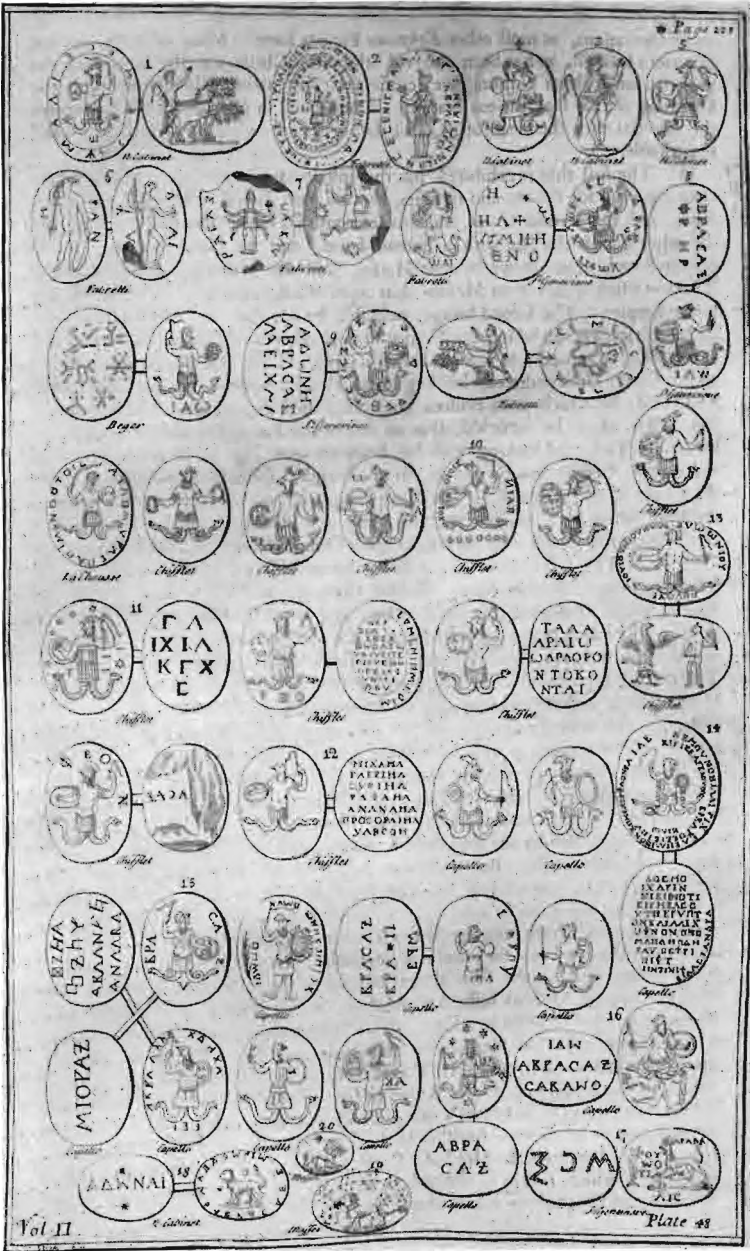
streams of culture are distinguished in the designs upon these gems. King is convinced of the Hindu origin of some of these elements. There is also distinguishable borrowing from Syria and the Syrian Gnosis. Cabalistical elements are introduced, and there was a blending of Mithraic symbols and those of the earlier Egyptians. There is probably no other group of religious jewels which can offer as wide a variety of unusual and meaningful emblems and figures.

Montfaucon in his *Antiquity Explained*, (London, 1721) devotes a section to the Abraxas symbols. These he divided into seven classes, distinguished by the nature of the symbols and inscriptions. As these classes are illustrated in Montfaucon's work by several large engravings showing collections of these signets, we reproduce the more important Plates which are little known and difficult to secure. All students of religious symbolism will do well to examine the figures carefully. In addition to his notes and translations, Montfaucon devotes considerable space to a none too flattering account of the Gnostic cult, based upon the opinion of the Ante-Nicean fathers. In substance, he takes the general attitude that the Gnostics were an heretical sect, and a cause of confusion and discord among the fathers of the early Church. The Roman opinion of the situation in general can be gathered from a letter written by the Emperor Hadrian: "The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and some of the votaries of that deity call themselves Bishops of Jesus Christ. There is, however, neither prince of the Jewish synagogue, nor Samaritan; no Christian presbyter, no mathematician, no soothsayer, nor *Aliptes*. When the Patriarch goes into Egypt, some will be ready to force him to worship Serapis, and some Jesus Christ."

The foregoing, which may be accepted as the unbiased opinion of a disinterested observer, gives some idea of the religious confusion that prevailed in Alexandria. It is not even certain whether the Patriarch referred to was Christian or Jewish, and it is quite possible that pagan sects had their own bishops and priestly leaders whose affiliations were far from clear. The condition of Christianity in North Africa is difficult to restore from the meager records of the period. Thus, the diversity of symbolism found on the Alexandrian gems was a faithful representation of the state of the public mind. The old Mystery Schools were gradually passing out of objective existence in the Mediterranean area. The Gnostic gems are, therefore, part of the symbolism of a dying concept of culture.

The French Father, Montfaucon, states that a number of Gnostic gems were excavated in the vicinity of his abbey, which had a collection of more than sixty of these stones. They were widely dispersed, and one came to light recently in the Arabian area. It had been set





From *Antiquity Explained*  
FIRST GNOTIC PLATE

into a brass mounting with the inscribed part turned in and used as a kind of button to hold an Arab cloak. Many had been found worked into religious jewelry to adorn good Moslems, Western Christians, and members of the Coptic Church. A measure of shrewdness has played its part in the preservation of the Gnostic gems. Books were destroyed, images broken, and holy relics permanently removed. On the other hand, gems were valuable, and although precious stones were not included in this class, many beautiful and colorful bits of jewelry were fashioned. No one seems to have thought of casting these aside. After their religious significance was forgotten, they were intriguing curiosities, with considerable material value as talismans and works of ancient art. It might be mentioned here that although synthetic gems and Roman paste were known, they were not employed in the making of Gnostic signets. At that time, natural materials were available and cheap, and more suitable to receive the complicated engraving.

The seven classifications into which Montfaucon arranged Gnostic gems are certainly arbitrary, but there is a broad pattern behind his plan. His arrangement is as follows: 1. Those with the true Abraxas symbol; 2. Those featuring the lion; 3. Those with figures or inscriptions of Serapis; 4. Those with symbols taken directly from the older Egyptian religion; 5. Those with human figures; 6. Those with inscriptions only; 7. Miscellaneous examples with extraordinary designs. Obviously those of the first class are bound most closely with the Gnostic sect, and when of contemporary manufacture may well have belonged to the initiated members. The peculiar concept of the human body with the head of a rooster, and legs ending in serpents, would not be so readily acceptable to non-members or those of contrary beliefs. The symbolism was too definite for mere decorative or even talismanic uses. The second class, featuring the lion, often with the body of a serpent, was also originally Gnostic in reference to one of their principal concepts—that of the “lion-faced light aeon.” The other group drifts gradually away from the central focus, and the symbols and deities represented are derived from a variety of sources. They are called Gnostic by association, or perhaps because we are not certain as to the boundaries of formal Gnosticism. It should be pointed out, however, that even the Abraxas figure itself may be found in combination with these more indefinite designs. There are also simple inscriptions which are intimately Gnostic, so it is impossible to say that any of the groups is actually disassociated. It would be interesting to know how the Gnostics themselves organized this confusion, and preserved the structure of their own beliefs.

We devoted considerable space to Gnostic doctrine in an earlier issue of *Horizon* (Spring 1947; Vol. 6, No. 4), so we will not repeat



From *Antiquity Explained*  
SECOND Gnostic PLATE



this groundwork. It will be necessary, however, to summarize again the Abraxas concept. It is commonly held that Abraxas was a solar deity, and that Gnostic Christians attempted to associate Christ with the sun or the solar principle. The head of the rooster was used, at least according to the critics of the sect, because this bird hailed the rising sun with its crowing. The Gnostics may have regarded themselves as heralds of the dawn of enlightenment. The deity carried a shield and a whip, the symbols of Sophia and Dynamis; the shield of wisdom, and the whip of power; these were certainly the passive and active extensions of the soul. In the Egyptian ritual, the head of the cock stood for foresight and vigilance, and, as the Gnostic Phronesis, it combined with the powers of wisdom and strength to form a kind of triad of primary divine attributes. The human body of Abraxas suggested the natural form of God, which, according to the ancients, was similar to that of man, and from this body extended the serpent legs, or supporters, Nous and Logos, the mind and the word, which sustain creation. Thus interpreted, the symbol is no longer entirely unreasonable or fantastic. To the initiated, it represented the qualities of the divine nature more graphically than would have been possible with a less curious type of figure.

Cabalistic speculations also played a part and mingled with the theories of the Alexandrian Neo-Pythagoreans. The numerical equivalent of the name Abraxas is 365, equivalent to the days of the year. There is also a spelling of the name Mithras which can be made to give the same number. The circle of the year was an ancient emblem to represent the world, time, the mutations of seasons, and the orderly procedure everywhere in mundane affairs. This ties Abraxas with the cosmic speculations of the astrologers, magicians, and geographers. Thus, this Gnostic pantheos, as the term signifies, was inclusive of many deities and doctrines, and as such, was an appropriate symbol of the Basilidian Gnosis. The figure itself is sometimes accompanied on the gems with the word Abraxas, but more often only by the letters I A O, which may be scattered around the central motif. These constitute the sacred name of deity. The Abraxas is sometimes shown in a chariot drawn by four horses, representing the Ages, in India the Yugas, or great procession of aeons. These are the gold, silver, bronze, and iron ages of the Greeks, and return in Christian symbolism as the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. The sun and moon occasionally accompany the Abraxas image. It is not known whether the Gnostics made statues to Abraxas, as none have survived. In the 19th century, the French transcendentalists, following the school of Eliphas Levi, carved Abraxas figures of wood, painted them in brilliant colors, and regarded them with considerable veneration. I have seen several of these figures, which are highly decorative.





The first Plate in the Montfaucon collection presents a typical group of gems. When two seals are connected by lines, the obverse and reverse are indicated. The italic words below the various gems indicate the sources of the illustrations. The general similarity of the Abraxas figure will be obvious, but it will be noticed that the deity faces either right or left and may or may not carry all of his attributes. In one seal in the upper row, the sign of Cancer, or the crab, is with the central figure. Another Abraxoid has the sun-god and horses on the reverse. In several cases, the shield of the deity is inscribed. At the lower right, Abraxas is represented as a quadruped, with a rooster's head, standing over a prone human figure, and apparently receiving the veneration of a devotee. As previously mentioned, the instructions are often so corrupt as to be unreadable, but on the reverse of the gem marked number 12, the names Michael, Gabriel, Muriel, Raphael, and Ananael may be distinguished. The reverse of number 14 is more informative. It may be translated "Give me grace and victory because I have pronounced thy secret and ineffable name." Apparently, this name is the I A O, which occurs on the shield of the figure to the left of the inscription, and on several others. Number 15 has the name Mithras on the reverse, thus tying the Persian cult to the Gnosis. In this case, the spelling has been changed so as to agree with the number 365. On number 16 the Abraxas appears to be seated above two figures. On the reverse are the sacred names I A O, Abraxas, and Sabaoth, the last hinting of the Cabala. Numbers 19 and 20 are obviously associated with astrology.

The second Plate emphasizes the lion form, but includes several composite symbols. The association of the lion with the bee in its mouth may be an allusion to the story of Samson who is also a solar hero. Figure 8 is typical of the Gnostic use of the lion. The letters in the rays emanating from the lion's head are not decipherable. Number 11 shows magical and astrological talismanic figures. These descended almost unchanged into the necromancy of medieval Europe, possibly through the gypsies. It is possible that the lion-headed serpent should be regarded as a time symbol, inasmuch as the god Phronis was sometimes called The Lion-headed. The most simple explanation is that the body of the serpent represents the pathway of the sun through the Zodiac, and the head of the lion the exaltation of the sun in Leo. The Gnostics considered this figure as a Christ symbol, by associating it with the lion of the tribe of Judah. At the bottom of this Plate are heads of Serapis with Gnostic allusions. It will be noticed that these were not inscribed.

The third Plate contains various allusions to Serapis, in combination with other symbols and figures. It will be noted that Harpocrates seated on a lotus, the Anubis figure with the head of a dog or jackal,





representations of the scarab beetle and various divinities, sphinxes, and tail-devouring serpents, are here in abundance. The vertical rod with three curved lines cutting through it may be a simplification of the serpent-wound staff occurring on the reverse of number 18. Harpocrates was not only the god of science, but was placed at the gates of the temple in a posture admonishing the initiates to keep their secrets faithfully and well. According to Porphyry, the later Egyptians considered the scarab as a solar symbol, associated with the resurrection. In number 7, Anubis is accompanied by a scorpion, and seems to have his foot on the tail of the insect. In this class, the inscriptions are less complicated and, when readable, are usually the names of deities, or brief words of praise and prayer. The serpent with the tail in his mouth, as represented in the central part of the engraving, is an ancient symbol of eternity. In number 29, Harpocrates is seated in a boat, and the design is almost completely Egyptian, except in the method of its presentation. Several of these signets apparently derive their inspiration from the Ophites, who held the serpent in great veneration, and considered it as a proper symbol of the Christian Mysteries. They reasoned that when Moses raised up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, he was referring to the coming Christ, who would also be raised or lifted up for the salvation of man. On number 19, directly to the right of the large central gem, the name Moses actually appears.

The fourth and fifth classes of Gnostic gems are included in the next Plate, and the lower sections of the preceding Plate. Thus we see various animals, insects, and composite creatures, and also designs essentially human in construction, including Greek and Roman gods and beings with multiple wings and arms. Number 2 of this group represents Jupiter, accompanied by the astrological signs of his planet, and Sagittarius. Number 3 and 4 present Mercury with the inscription Michael, and Diana accompanied by the word Gabriel. On number 15 is Canopus, in the form of a jar from which water is flowing. This figure is associated with the zodiacal sign Aquarius. On the reverse is a typical magic star. On number 30, Cupid and Psyche are seen embracing. Most of the other designs represent deities or aeons. Number 34 is of unusually fine workmanship, and its direct relation to the Gnosis is uncertain. In many gems of this type, there are crude inscriptions on the reverse, which seem to have been added for magical purposes. The inscription on number 36 includes the following: "Holy Name, Propitious Powers, preserve Vibia Paulina from every evil Demon." Vibia Paulina is evidently the person for whom the charm was made.

A considerable part of the next Plate is devoted to the sixth class, consisting of inscriptions without figures. The first number identifies a large seal, on the obverse of which is a prayer, and on the reverse, a





From *Antiquity Explained*

### FIFTH Gnostic PLATE



combination of vowels which may be a cipher. Number 4 is similar, with a number of magical symbols. Number 13 suggests the deity Horus standing on a crocodile, and is strongly Egyptian. Number 12, at the lower right, is about five inches high, combining numerous elements and perhaps intimating a ritual, or unfolding part of the esoteric doctrine of the cult. The Plates that follow are largely astrological, combined with references to Egyptian and Roman deities. They are not reproduced as they have little Gnostic interest.

Another important and almost unknown relic of the Gnosis is the small book engraved on leaves of lead, mentioned by King. At least two examples of the Leaden Book are recorded. One apparently belonged to the famous Jesuit scholar, Father Kircagr, and the other was in the collection of Montfaucon. We reproduce two leaves from the latter. These leaves measure three by four inches, and are engraved on both sides. As there are six leaves, there are twelve groups of symbols and inscriptions. The example belonging to Kircagr had seven leaves. King believes that the book of seven leaves contained prayers and magical formulas to be used by the souls of the dead when addressing the deities of the planets. Montfaucon writes that the twelve pages (six leaves) were devoted to the symbols of the twelve hours of the day. He doubts that the known examples of the Leaden Book were contemporary with the original Gnostic sect, but it is evident that they are of considerable antiquity. They may have been inspired by the elaborate Egyptian manuscript of the ritual of the dead. In the later period of the Egyptian religion, it was usual to condense these manuscripts, using only short sections of prayers, and preserving the most significant parts of the funerary rites.

The early Fathers of the Church liked to assume that Basilides derived his religious philosophy from the teachings of Aristotle. This position, however, cannot be adequately maintained. Basilides and his son, Isidorus, assert definitely that they had been instructed in the secret Mysteries of Christianity by Mather the Evangelist. The Gnostics in general assumed that Christ had communicated his true teachings only to his nearest and most advanced disciples. These true teachings were the foundation of the Gnosis, according to the testimony of the initiated. Hippolytus seems to have regarded the Basiliadian theory as a new interpretation, or adaptation, of the ancient teachings of the Egyptian priesthood. There were several schools of the Gnosis, and the teachings of Basilides differ in one important particular from the other sects. This Egyptian Initiate, in the unfoldment of his system, completely ignored the existence of an evil principle in the universe. In this, he certainly followed the Egyptians, who would have been deeply offended by any theology which affirmed that deity would have



From *Antiquity Explained*

#### GNOSTIC BOOK ON SMALL TABLETS OF LEAD

created or entered into conflict with an evil power. In the system of Basilides, creation unfolded from spiritual seeds, or roots, that resided in the vast substance of unconditioned existence, or dimensionless being. From these seeds came forth three creative agencies, corresponding to the Trinity. These, in turn, fashioned the world, which was divided into three parts. The highest of these parts was the eternal abode of divine principles; the lowest unfolded into the material universe; and between these extremes was placed a mysterious power, which, through the release of its own potency, ultimately engendered mankind. Man, therefore, lives in what is called "a middle distance," surrounded by the aeons of the superior and inferior creations, and containing their powers within himself. Man cannot ascend directly to the abode of principles because he lacks the internal faculties necessary to experience the infinite. He must, therefore, be content to grow and unfold in the world that has been provided for him. In due time, however, the divine power will provide him with a redeemer, who will conduct him through the Mysteries, and reveal to him the secrets of his own origin. The followers of Basilides believed that this redeemer was Christ, whom they accepted mystically and philosophically, but not in the literal sense of orthodox Christian theology. With strange symbols they traced their ideas, and, to those who have the proper keys, the curious inventions preserved in their writings and upon their gems become intelligible. Gnosticism will continue to be of interest as a profoundly psychological approach to the riddle of man's place in the divine plan.



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## Curiouser & Curiouser

*A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

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### The Rowley Parchments

Thomas Chatterton has been described as the most mysterious personage of the literary world. Chatterton was born in 1752, and was only fifteen years of age when he deceived many of the best scholars of England by his production of remarkable parchments which he claimed had been written several centuries previously. There seems no reasonable explanation for the career of this marvelous and ingenious boy. His whole life is a problem difficult to solve, though it is generally assumed that he was possessed of a precocious genius.

Chatterton is supposed to have secured the idea for his literary inventiveness from the discovery of several 15th century parchments in St. Mary's Redcliffe Church, at Bristol, England, where he was born. The lad looked upon these documents with more than natural curiosity, and attempted to decipher them. This was possible because his uncle was the sexton of the church.

The old parchments discovered at St. Mary's were few in number, but caused considerable stir among historians and literary men, and Chatterton was inspired to increase the number of these early records. In order to accomplish this purpose, he was compelled to invent a suitable origin for the manuscripts he fabricated. He created Thomas Rowley, a 15th century monk. Having brought this fictitious person into existence, he attributed to him several short poems and bits of history. Chatterton made a considerable study of the letters and spelling which distinguished the original parchments. He then transposed his own writings into this ancient style, and then discolored and mu-



tilated the parchments so expertly that they had a convincing appearance of great antiquity. Chatterton showed his forgeries, or perhaps more correctly frauds, about the city of Bristol, where they attracted much attention.

It should be noted in passing that the fabrications, especially those in verse, were outstanding in poetic quality. There was rumor that Thomas Rowley was the greatest English poet prior to Shakespeare. Fired with the success which he had achieved locally, Chatterton was inspired to send a batch of the Rowley poems to London, addressed to Sir Horace Walpole, who was as much of an English literary light as he was an eminent statesman of the country. It is said that Walpole read the poems with the greatest amazement. He praised them to the skies, on the grounds of their quality alone, and was ready to proclaim himself a joint discoverer of rare manuscripts from bygone centuries. Needless to say, the best minds of England were ready to follow Walpole's decision.

It remained for the poet Thomas Gray to discover the deception in the Rowley poems. Gray was not only a poet, but a scholar, literary critic, and antiquarian. He had devoted much of his time to the study of early English poetry, and from his broad knowledge he detected various inconsistencies in Chatterton's productions and pronounced them the work of a modern writer. When this was pointed out to Walpole, he became justly indignant and denounced the boy as a common cheat. In the general confusion, no one realized the lad's incredible ability. Chatterton was not discouraged, however, by the furious denunciation of Walpole and others, and, when he was sixteen years of age, he went to London in the hope of establishing himself in a literary career under his own name. He arrived at the great city with less than five pounds in his pocket, and a bad reputation. He was unable, in spite of the proven fact of his genius, to secure any employment by which he could make a living. He lived in a garret on bread and water, and on many days had nothing at all to eat.

Chatterton spent the few shillings that he was occasionally able to earn by his literary skill on presents for his mother, instead of providing himself with food and clothing. He wrote all night by candlelight, and in the daytime trudged the streets of London, trying in vain to sell his poems or satires. The really wonderful compositions which he produced during this period were never appreciated and seldom accepted. Finally, in August 1770, when he was seventeen years of age, he committed suicide, spending his last penny for arsenic. Next morning he was found dead in his attic, with his unsold manuscripts torn into fragments, scattered about on the floor. Even today Chatterton's name is clouded by the unfortunate thing that he did. But he is recognized as one of the most versatile and gifted of English poets.



COLLECTION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

THE BHAVACHAKRA, OR TIBETAN WHEEL OF LIFE

## Library Notes

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### The *Bhavachakra*, The Wheel of Life

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BY A. J. HOWIE



Among the additions to the library collection during the past couple of years is a brilliantly colored Tibetan style temple banner depicting the *Bhavachakra*. It is difficult to estimate its age because, while the pictorial portion of the banner is fresh and undamaged, this might be the result of careful preservation. However, I believe that this is a fairly modern painting. It is far from being as detailed and complex as those reproduced by Mr. Hall in *The Phoenix* after Waddell and the *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India*. But modern or not, it gives us an opportunity to observe that the "old way" of realization still may be found. We shall compare what this artist determined to represent with the content of the older works and traditions.

When we decided to discuss the *Bhavachakra*, it seemed as if there should not be too much trouble in finding numerous references that would be interesting to present. There are many books on Buddhism. But the pedants usually are not open-minded on the subject of "heathen" beliefs, and the English-speaking students sincerely interested in oriental religious ideas are mono-lingual with few exceptions. These are serious limitation upon which to enlarge our understanding.

The spiritual motivation that inspired Buddha resulted from his realization of an infinitely greater pattern of existence that transcends the individual objects and incidents of the phenomenal world. It is told that the full realization itself came in a flash, but that flash of understanding was the culmination of years of seeking, study, meditation, the details of which fill many books relating the incidents of his life. After the burst of illumination under the Bodhi tree, the rest of Buddha's life was spent in teaching, in finding words and illustrations that would awaken the same realization or illumination in others.



The formulas of belief were not enough. Neither he nor anyone else could confer the boon of understanding. He used simple parables and self-evident truths to illustrate the way to awaken the understanding to unlimited spheres of awareness. Buddhist literature, the sacred or canonical books, are the records of his words and actions as Gautama, his references to previous existences, his teachings to disciples, followers, and the multitude. Inevitably, the manuscript copies have been imperfectly transcribed, the originals lost, and translations uncertainly taken from the corrupt copies.

One early source of Buddhist conceptions is preserved in the symbolic art forms. The lotus, the animal figures, the trees, the halos, the garments, all are interpretive devices more ancient than Buddhism, but with fundamental Buddhist explanations, even though the actual form of the symbol may be modified by infinite variations according to the individual preferences of the thousands of artists. The traditional significance of the lotus, the divinity indicated by the nimbus, the tortures of the damned, escape the limitations of individual picturization.

The name *Bhavachakra* is composed of two words—*chakra*, wheel, and *bhava*, birth origin, source, worldly existence, life, world.

The teaching of Buddha concerning the doctrine of rebirth was revolutionary. It had not been publicly taught previously although accepted as an esoteric doctrine for the initiated Brahman caste. The popular appeal of Buddha was that he gave hope to the Sudras, shattered the caste system. Buddha commanded those who realized the cycle of life and death to "turn the wheel of the law," to control the cycle of destiny, to accept individual responsibility for harmful and destructive actions, to labor for increased opportunity, to awaken from the illusions of life and death, and to strive for the goal of the *nirvanic* state of no return.

According to Waddell, the tradition of how Buddha first outlined the diagram of the Wheel of Life is preserved in the *Divyadana*. This literature seems not easily obtainable in English. In 1886 the Cambridge University Press published a transliterated edition of a Nepalese Sanskrit mss. edited and collated by E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil. We have a copy of this work in the library, but I have not been able to find a lead to any translations.

According to one legend mentioned by Waddell, Buddha and a group of disciples were walking through a rice-field. To illustrate the subject under discussion, he plucked a stalk of rice and outlined with rice grains on the ground the diagram of the *Wheel of Life*. The pictorial elements were later introduced in the second century of this era by Nagarjuna.

In a footnote Waddell mentions a direct reference to the *Divya-vadana*. Buddha on one occasion instructed Ananda to make a wheel-like figure for the purpose of illustrating what another disciple saw when he visited other spheres, which it seems he was in the habit of doing. The wheel was to have five spokes between which were to be depicted the gods, men, animals, and hells. In the center a dove, a serpent, and a hog were to symbolize lust, hatred, and ignorance. Around the outside a band was to contain a twelve-fold circle of causation in the regular and inverse order.

Waddell writes of his discovery, among the frescoes of the ancient Buddhist caves of Ajanta in Central India, of a fine example of the Bhavachakra which he claims is over thirteen centuries old. He reproduced the wheel in his *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, London, 1895. This is a scarce book now, and Mr. Hall made the Plate more generally available in *The Phoenix*, Los Angeles, 1931-1932.

A similar *chakra*, but square in format, was reproduced from the *Journal and Text of the Buddhist Text Society of India* in 1895. This interpretation of the *Bhavachakra* was obtained from a Yellow-cap monastery at Lhasa. The similarities and differences of artistic emphasis are instructive.

It seems to be generally accepted that the symbolic wheel of trans-migratory existence, the cycle of rebirth, is sustained by a monstrous creature, is the creation of a horrible egoism, is an illusion of reality. The monster is clothed with a tiger skin to symbolize a body related to the animal world. The figure reproduced with this article does not show the tiger skin. In our painting, the monster's head is adorned with five smiling skulls and a third eye. Each skull is surmounted with a nimbus suggesting the essential divinity that survives death. The third eye seems to be directed upward, away from the cycle of illusion. The skulls and third eye are missing in Waddell's figure. Antoinette K. Gordon in her *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism* says: "The wheel is held by a demon or a dragon symbolizing the 'hideousness of clinging to life'"

The central hub of all three examples of the *Bhavachakra* are encircled with a serpent, a boar, and a bird, the tail of each in the mouth of the creature following. The serpent and the boar are all similar, but the bird is variously described and depicted. The cardinal sins common to all men—lust, anger, hatred, ignorance, stupidity—consume each other in an endless cycle within the very heart of the wheel of rebirth from which man must free himself.

The bank around the dark central circle in our figure does not yield to an interpretation based on the square *chakra* and is missing

in Waddell's figure. Therefore we shall not try to force an interpretation.

It would be misleading to make any sweeping statements about what Buddhist concepts really are because in various ages and places there have been numerous interpretations or emphases. The Northern Buddhists, the *Mahayana* Buddhists, those of the "greater vehicle," have had broad and inclusive doctrines; the Southern Buddhists, the followers of the *Hinayana*, the "lesser vehicle," have adhered to a stricter and more literal interpretation of the earliest Buddhistic doctrines.

The *Bhavachakra* is the product of Buddhism as it has survived in Tibet. Possibly the origins were Buddhistic; but also they could be the result of growth and expansion of the earlier, more primitive, native beliefs.

At any rate, it seems they believe that the cycle of rebirth is common to gods and men, or perhaps that men pass through a cycle that includes a godly state. The gods exist for long ages in the heaven worlds, but they must ultimately relinquish that life, and depending upon their actions as gods, they may descend to the hells, or walk again among men, or endure an animal existence. It is a confusing combination of credulities to the western mind that revels in a scientific wording even in depicting spiritual concepts. But the *modus operandi* of the oriental tenets regarding rebirth is no more confusing to the lay mind than the science of the law of averages, chance that is no chance in the sense of accident. There is no unreason in speculating about a spiritual chemistry that crystallizes various bodies about a dynamic nucleus of causes. Nor is it unreasonable to theorize about laws that might govern such crystallizations.

The Tibetan Buddhists seem to find nothing inconsistent in the idea that a god can make mistakes, sin, and fall from grace, suffer punishment, make his own atonement, war against the elements. They seem to accept the divinity in every creature, the potential evolution from a present existence into a godly estate from which an entity may pass to larger spheres from which there is no return.

The *Bhavachakra* can be accepted as a chart for the individual as he exists during life and between lives; or it can be taken as a universal pattern for all mundane creation. But however it is interpreted, none of it is offensive to reasonable consideration. Just because Buddhist beliefs do not magically confer perfection on believers, or because believers stray from the path of their knowledge, or because it is just the belief of those who follow "heathen" gods, there is no reason to close the mind to a study of this chart of Buddha's "wheel of becoming," his twelve-linked chain of causation.



The various regions of rebirth are represented in the *Bhavachakra* by the six major segments (primitively five). The wheel reproduced with this article has greatly simplified the symbols and has only a few of the elements contained in the earlier *chakras*. For this reason we shall discuss the subject from the more comprehensive viewpoint of the general symbolism rather than the simplified detail of this wheel. The segments are apportioned as follows:

1. The gods, the *Suras*, *Devas* (Tibetan, *Lha*).
2. The *Asuras* (not-gods), comparable to the Greek Titans.
3. World of man.
4. World of beasts.
5. World of tantalized ghosts, the *pretas*.
6. *Naraka*, the hot and cold hells.

In the *chakras* which show only five segments, the world of the *Suras* and the *Asuras* are combined. Existence in the first three worlds is considered superior or good, and the last three inferior or unfortunate.

There is no place allotted in the cycle for *Sukhavati*, the western paradise of everlasting existence, the region of the celestial Buddhas.

The bright realm of the gods is Indra's paradise. Its atmosphere is yellow. In it are portrayed the four states of godly birth—bliss, passion, misery, and death. In the lowest compartment of the heavens are the four great guardian kings of the quarters.

The gods are born fully developed within a halo of glory from a lotus-flower. The pictorial attributes of the gods are: (1) A lotus footstool, (2) splendid dress and ornaments, (3) goddess-companions, (4) a wish-granting tree, the *Kalpadarū*, which instantly yields any fruit or food wished for, and bends to the hand of the gatherer, its leaves providing luscious food, its juice nectar, and its fruit jewels, (5) a wish-granting cow that gives any drink wished for, (6) self-sprung crops (usually shown as Indian corn or maize), (7) a jewelled horse-of-foreknowledge which carries its rider throughout the worlds of the past, present, and future, (8) a lake of perfumed nectar or ambrosia (*Amrita*) which is the elixir of life and the source of the divine luster. Shining is a peculiarly divine attribute, and the word divinity has its root in the Sanskrit *div*, to shine, which is familiar to us in the word *Deva*, the shining ones, and can be traced in the word *Deus*.

The bliss of the gods is shown by the figures enjoying themselves in splendid palaces in the midst of charming gardens in full bloom. Brilliantly plumaged birds and splendid animals disport themselves.

Among the birds is the fabled *Kala-pinkā* which repeats the mystic *om mani padme hum*.

In the center of this paradise is the great city of *Sudarsana* (bella vista) within which is the celestial palace *Amaravati*, the residence of *Indra*, king of the gods. Its walls open at four gates which are guarded by the four divine kings of the quarters. It is a three-storied building, *Indra* occupying the basement, *Brahma* the middle, and the war-god the uppermost story. This is a perversion of the old Buddhist order of the heavens, but the Tibetans emphasized the importance of the war god, and he is an important factor in the unceasing war between the *Suras* and the *Asuras*.

The *Asuras* are constantly trying to seize some of the precious fruit of the great tree *Parijata*, the "tree of the concentrated essence of earth's products," whose branches are in heaven, but whose roots are in the world of the *Asuras*. The climber which encircles this tree is called the *Jambuti* tree, and it is the medium by which the quintessence of the most rare delicacies of *Jambudvīpa*, the symbolic name of our own world, the center of which is the Bodhi-tree at *Budh Gaya*, are instilled into the larger tree.

The gods enjoy bliss for almost incalculable measures of time, but when their merit is exhausted, the lake of nectar dries up for each, his wish-granting tree, cow, and horse die; his splendid dress and ornaments grow dim and disappear; his palace gets dilapidated; his flowers and garden fade; his body, no longer bathed by nectar, loses its luster and he sweats like mortals, so that his person becomes loathsome to his goddess-companions and the other gods, who shun him; and so the poor god dies miserably. If he has led a virtuous life during his existence as a god, then he may be reborn in heaven, otherwise he goes to a lower region, even to hell.

The *Asuras* were originally gods, but through their pride, they were expelled from heaven. This is considered the world of rebirth for those who, during their human career, have boasted of being more pious than their neighbors. The duration of life here is infinitely greater than the human span. The *Asuras* enjoy great luxury, but they suffer from envy of the greater bliss of the gods, and they die prematurely fighting vainly against the gods for the fruits of the heavenly tree and the divine nectar.

Their region is represented by an almost colorless atmosphere. They live in fortified houses. The ground both inside and outside is carpeted with flowers. Usually there is a figure to represent their divine birth. The major portion of the section is devoted to the miseries of

the *Asuras* centering about their hopeless struggle and fatal conflict with the gods. The commander of the forces is seen in conclave with his leaders, horses are being saddled, and the heroes are arming themselves with coats of mail and weapons. Another scene shows the battle raging along the border separating their country from heaven, and the general mounted with his staff as spectators in the background. In our picture, the conflict takes place within the one section rather than at the border between the members of the two sections. The warriors of the first line are being killed or mangled by the thunderbolts and adamantine weapons hurled at them by the gods. One of the weapons possessed by both the *Suras* and *Asuras* is the spiked disc.

The ultimate fate of the *Asuras* is to die painfully warring against the *Suras* with whom they are in constant conflict. They are deprived of access to the ambrosia with which the wounded *Suras* obtain instant recovery.

Another scene in this segment depicts the womenfolk gathered about the "Reflecting Lake of Perfect Clearness." They suffer from seeing mirrored in the lake all the doings and ultimate fate of their lords as they war against the gods. They see also the region of rebirth for themselves, which nearly always is hell because of the passionate life which they lead in the *Asura* world. While their lovers die painful and miserable deaths, their womenfolk sit fascinated beside the lake experiencing the horror of the hideous spectacles revealed, some of them giving vent to their grief as they roll about on the bank.

In the segment devoted to the world of men, a most pessimistic view is taken of human life. The course of life is made up of almost unalloyed misery, its striving, its perennially unsatisfied desire, its sufferings from the extremes of heat, cold, thirst, hunger, discomforts from surfeit of food, anxiety of the poor for their daily bread, of the farmer laboring for his crops and cattle, unfulfilled desires, separation from relatives, subjection to temporal laws, the infirmities of old age and disease.

In the Waddell wheel, the following phases of life are depicted among others: Birth in a cottage; children at play; village scenes; men toiling at various labors; accident, a man and horse falling into a river; crime; temporal government; old age; disease, a physician feeling the pulse of a patient; death, a corpse with a lama testing for breath, another lama doing worship, and women and relatives weeping; funeral ceremonies, a corpse being carried off to a funeral pyre on top of a hill, preceded by a lama holding the end of a white scarf affixed to the corpse. The object of the scarf is to guide the soul of



the corpse by the white path to the pyre so that it may be disposed of in the orthodox manner and have the best chance of a good rebirth, and may not stray and get caught by outside demons. Behind the corpse-bearer is a porter with food and drink offerings, and last of all a mourning relative. Religion is represented by a temple placed above all other habitations with a lama and monk performing worship; and a hermit in his cell and a devotee outside circumambulating a small stupa.

In the world of beasts, there is even greater misery than in the human. Land and water animals devour one another, the larger preying upon the smaller. Human hunters are abroad with nets and bows to kill. Domestic animals are laden with burdens, or being goaded at the plough; others are being milked or shorn. Some are being butchered, branded, nostrils bored. All are suffering great misery through the anxiety and pains of preying or being preyed upon. In the water is shown a *Naga* or merman's house with its inmates in terror at being preyed upon by the *Garuda*, a monster bird.

Another state of existence is shown in the fifth segment, the World of *Pretas*, a region of tantalized spirits. These wretched starvelings are in constant distress through the pangs of hunger and thirst. Thirty-six species are described in five groups: (a) The foreign or gentle horrid things; (b) Horrid beings; (c) eating and drinking horrid beings; (d) an unmentionable type of beings; (e) ghosts that are free to roam in the human world. This special torment is for those who, in their earthly careers were miserly, covetous, uncharitable, or gluttonous. Jewels, food, and drink are found in plenty, but the poor *Pretas* have mouths no bigger than the eye of a needle, and gullets no thicker in diameter than a hair, through which they can never ingest a satisfying amount of food for their huge bodies. And when any food is taken it becomes burning hot, and changes in the stomach into sharp knives, saws, and other weapons that lacerate their way to the surface, making large painful wounds. They are constantly crying "Water, water, give water," but whenever they attempt to touch water it changes to liquid fire. Avalokita is frequently figured in the act of giving water to these *Pretas* to relieve their misery. There are many legends concerning those who have descended to the world of *Pretas* to give aid to parents or loved ones.

The lowest segment represents *Naraka*, the Buddhist hell, the region of awful lessons. Although the popular mind accepts this region and its tortures as a material reality, the better informed lamas take the philosophical viewpoint that it is a creation of the individual's own ideas, a sort of hellish nightmare.

*Naraka* is described as a true inferno situated in the bowels of the earth and presided over by Yama, the king and judge of the dead, who himself is finite and periodically tortured. Every day he is forced to swallow molten metal.

The Great Judgment is determined solely by the person's own deeds, and is concretely pictured by the ordeal of scales, where the good deeds, as white pebbles, are weighed against the sins, as black counters, in balances; and the judge holds a mirror which reveals the soul in its nakedness. "Not in the heavens, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself in the clefts of the mountains wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the force resulting from thy evil actions." "Through the six states of transmigration does the power of our actions lead us. A life in heaven awaits the good. The warders of hell drag the wicked before the king of hell, Yama, who says to them:

"'Didst thou not when on earth see the five divine messengers sent to warn thee—the child, the old man, the sick, the criminal suffering punishment, and the dead corpses?'"

"The wicked man answers: 'I did see them.'"

"'And didst thou not think within thyself: 'I also am subject to birth, old age, and death. Let me be careful to do good works.''"

"And the wicked man answers: 'I did not, sire; I neglected in my folly to think of these things.'"

"Yama then pronounces his doom: 'These thy evil deeds are not the work of thy mother, father, relatives, friends, advisers. Thou alone hast done them all; thou alone must gather the fruit.'"

"The warders then drag him off to the various regions of torment."

*Naraka* is divided into numerous compartments, each with a special sort of torture devised to suit the sins to be expiated. They are variously described and numbered. In general there are eight hot hells and eight cold hells, each with numerous subdivisions. Then there is described an outer hell through which all those escaping from hell must pass without a guide.

The entrance to *Naraka* is at the bank of the *Baitarani* or "three path river." An old hag strips the clothes from the new arrivals and hangs them on a tree behind her. She is 100 feet tall, with eyes like burning wheels, and she dispatches the condemned souls along their respective roads. The tortures in the hot hells are pictured as involving cutting, mangling, squeezing, screaming and weeping, heat, and the worst, *Avichi*, endless torture. Then there are the eight cold hells.

The outer ring is the path of humanity which may be trodden in the white direction of piety, or in the dark way of sin. All states of existence are in man's lot. He may choose to go the peaceful way to *Nirvana*, or in the direction of the states of suffering and sorrow in *kāma loka*, the world of desires. The subject of the outer circle warrants a separate and longer paper on the 12 *nīdanas*, the causes of the recurring states of existence. Roughly, the figures in the outer circle portray these states as follows:

- (1) *Avidya*—ignorance typified by a blind man.
- (2) *Samskāra*—by a potter and pots (creation).
- (3) *Vijnana*—(consciousness, i. e., the restless soul) typified by the monkey.
- (4) *Namarupa*—typified by the boat containing a man, woman, and animals.
- (5) *Shad-Ayatana*—by the empty house containing doors, windows, etc., symbolical of the organs of sense.
- (6) *Sparsa*—(contact) the husband and wife embracing each other.
- (7) *Vedana*—(sensation) of delusive pleasure and pain suggested by an arrow entering a man's eye.
- (8) *Trishna*—desire for worldly enjoyments, a man drinking wine and a woman holding the wine-jug to replenish his cup.
- (9) *Upadana*—indulgence of desire, a man collecting fruit in a basket.
- (10) *Bhava*—conception.
- (11) *Jati*—birth.
- (12) *Marana*—death, a dead body being carried to the cemetery.

We have tried to quote the best words of the few researchers into the symbolism of the *Bhavachakra*. We hope that they will prove appropriate to the beautiful conciseness of the pattern of man whirling through space on the wheel of death and rebirth. Each universe, set in unfathomable space, rests upon a warp and woof of "blue air" or wind upon which is set "the body of the waters" wherein there is a foundation of gold on which the earth rotates from its axis of towers at the great Mount Meru. Who is man to claim the sole perspective?



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