

REINCARNATION

VOL. V.

CHICAGO, MAY-JUNE, 1920

No. 9.

STARVING MID-EUROPE

All our philosophy is required to comprehend the meaning of the world's present status. That Central Europe is starving is the most difficult fact of all to justify. The world has food enough in its storehouses but a great body of its peoples is dying.

Vae victis! The old cry of the age of tooth and claw still resounds. There are not a few in America, where food is sufficient, who say, as did a lovable and tender American mother a few days ago, "Let them starve; think how they made us suffer; think how wicked were their deeds!" But this feeling is not deep-seated; it can be reversed in a few moments of thought and argument. In America hatred for the con-

quered is not the adequate cause of national indifference. American food-stocks are not excessive; they are barely sufficient and the prices of food are high. Besides, the demands of the laboring people with the inadequacy of the railways makes production difficult and transportation an exasperating problem. Then, too, we do not surely know that panic, the specter of financial fear, may not seize our land and break down the subtle structure of that mutual trust which business activity rests upon.

So our Congress dallied with the bill appropriating one hundred and fifty millions to starving Europe and then—dropped it in the waste-basket!

And what will Europe do, poor thing? Well, they will go on starving. The sick will die for lack of food and care; the children will die,—such as are still alive. For in some lands *there are no children under seven years of age; all have died of hunger and disease!*

America is not deaf. The Red Cross aids. Relief Committees for the various lands go up and down gathering inadequate doles. Garments cannot be sent abroad because they are stolen on the way.

It is a comfort to know that the American Relief Committee has stocks of food in many parts of Europe. But the quantity is inadequate and, except for the children, the food must be paid for before it leaves its place of storage!

To cap the climax the food-producing lands of such countries as Hungary and Austria have been taken away and allotted to other nations. And of course the weak, starving, war-worn peasantry, devoid of draft animals, cannot till the remaining

soil as it should be done.

At least we must try to gather all the resources we can find to send to their aid.

The wreckage, waste and suffering belong to karmic discharge upon men for the wrongs of the past. Beware of thoughts and feelings of hatred. They loose the fiends of hell. Philosophy seems remote from human suffering. It is not! Philosophy is the knowledge of causes. And causes are just at the back of facts. Remove causes and facts melt away! Good-will cures many ills.

It is old hatreds that now are acting to prevent the relief of the great agony of our brothers!

W. V-H.

REINCARNATION AND SPIRIT CHILDREN AMONG THE ABORIGINALS OF AUSTRALIA

By W. Baldwin Spencer, C.M.G., M.A., F.R.S.,
Professor of Biology in the University of Melbourne,
Special Commissioner for Aborigines,
Northern Territory.*

The belief in reincarnation is very firmly held by all the central tribes from the Urubunna in the south right across the continent to those inhabiting the Coburg Peninsula on the northern coast line. In the Arunta tribe, the natives believe that in the far past times their ancestors,

*From Federal Handbook prepared in connection with the eighty-fourth meeting of The British Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Australia, August, 1914.

who were endowed with powers much superior to those of their living representatives, wandered across the country. They were divided into groups, kangaroo men and women in one, wichetty grub people in another, emu people in another, and so on. The track followed by each group is well known and, when they halted at various places, some of them went into the ground, their spirit parts remaining above, each in company with a churinga. The whole Arunta country is thus dotted over with local centres—one haunted by kangaroo, another by grub spirits, and so on. At the present day it is these spirit children who are continually undergoing reincarnation. Each spirit has associated with it another, called Arumburinga, which is its double and always remains outside, living at the old camping ground of the spirit when the latter is reincarnated. Many of the more important of these old ancestors are known by name, and the old men decide the particular one of whom any child is the reincarnation. If the latter be known, the child bears the name of the ancestor. This name, however, is not used in public; it is secret, and known only to the old men of the totemic group. The individual himself only hears it when he is fully grown, and it is never mentioned except in whispers. When a child is born one or two of the old men actually go out in search of the churinga. Sometimes they find it, sometimes they do not, in which event they make a new one, so that each individual is represented by his churinga in the local storehouse called ertnatulunga. A woman going into the vicinity of one of these places is always liable to be entered by one of the spirit

children. Whenever also a native dies, his spirit goes back to its old camping ground and remains there until it chooses to be reincarnated.

In Queensland, Roth states that the Tully River blacks believed that children result from one or other of four causes:—(1) a woman sits over a fire on which she has roasted a piece of fish (black bream) that has been given to her by her husband; (2) she goes out hunting and catches a special bull frog; (3) some man tells her to have a child; or (4) she dreams that a child has gone inside her. The Cape Bedford blacks believe that spirit children enter the mother in the form of a curlew, if they be girls, and in that of a snake, if boys. If they hear the curlew whistling at night they say "Hallo, there is a child about." According to the Pennefather natives, a mythic being called Anjea makes children out of swamp mud and puts them in the mothers. He is never seen, but can be heard laughing in the scrub.

In the Warramunga tribe, each totemic group is supposed to have had one great ancestor who wandered over the country, performing ceremonies at different spots, where he left spirit children behind, and it is these who are now born again. So again in the Gnanji tribe there is just the same belief, but in addition, if a man travels, spirit children from his own place may follow him up and go inside his wife.

In the Kadku tribe on the northern coast, the beliefs are very precise and detailed. There are supposed to have been a limited number of ancestors who deposited spirit children at different places. These have been continually undergoing

reincarnation. In these tribes the names of all these people are known, and every individual now bears the name of one of them. When a man dies, his spirit part stays with his bones, after the mourning ceremonies are over, forming what is called Yalmuru. This gives off a double of itself somewhat like the Arumburinga in the Arunta, but here called Iwaiyu. It is the latter that enters a woman and undergoes reincarnation. Later on again, the original Yalmuru, who watches over the man or woman during his or her lifetime, is supposed to become worn out, so that when the man dies the old Iwaiyu becomes the new Yalmuru, which in course of time produces a new Iwaiyu, and so on, generation after generation.

In the Broome district in Western Australia, according to Mrs. Bates, the natives believe that every child must be "dreamed" by its father, and the "dream-baby" is called Ngargarula. If the latter does not appear to the father, and his wife gives birth to a child, the father does not believe that the child belongs to him. If, on the other hand, a man is separated from his wife for a long time, and, while he is away, a Ngargarula comes to him and his wife has a child, he believes this belongs to him, no matter how long a time he may have been separated from his wife. These ideas in regard to reincarnation and the origin of children have now been shown to be very widely spread over Australia and were, doubtless, once held by tribes who are now much too decadent to retain beliefs of this nature, which are naturally amongst the first to be discarded when the aboriginal comes into contact with civilization.

LAFCADIO HEARN ON METEMPSYCHOSIS

In *Current Opinion* for December is an extract from an article on "Metempsychosis" published in 1880, from which we print the following paragraph of incoherent but pretty rhapsodies that seem like a parody on the substantial facts of reincarnation:

In "Metempsychosis" (printed in the *Item*, September 7, 1880), for instance, we find Hearn championing "the mighty knowledge of the East." One of the participants of this dialogue is permitted to voice this beautiful expression of Hearn's philosophy:

"We have nothing to do with souls, but with facts. The metempsychosis is only the philosophic symbol of a vast natural fact, grotesque only to those who understand it not;—just as the most hideous Indian idol, diamond-eyed and skull-chapleted, represents to the Brahmin a hidden truth incomprehensible to the people. Conscious of the eternity of Matter and Force;—knowing that the substances of whirling universes, like clay in the hand of the potter, have been and are being and will be forever fashioned into myriad shifting forms;—knowing that shapes alone are evanescent, and that each atom of our living bodies has been from the beginning and will always be, even after the mountains have melted like wax in the heat of a world's dissolution;—it is impossible to regard the theory of transmigration as a mere fantasy. Each particle of our flesh has lived before our birth through millions of transmigrations more wonderful than any poet has dared to dream of; and the life-force that throbs in the heart of each one of us has throbbed for all time in the eternal metempsychosis of the universe. Each atom of our blood has doubtless circulated, before our very civilization commenced, through the veins of millions of living creatures—soaring, crawling, or dwelling in the depths of the sea; and each molecule that floats in a sunbeam has, perhaps, vibrated to the thrill of human passion. The soil under my foot has lived and loved; and Nature, re-fashioning the paste

in her awful laboratory into new forms of being, shall make this clay to live and hope and suffer again. Dare I even whisper to you of the past transformations of the substance of the rosiest lips you have kissed, or the brightest eyes which have mirrored your look? We have lived innumerable lives in the past; we have lived in the flowers, in the birds, in the emerald abysses of the ocean;—we have slept in the silence of solid rocks, and moved in the swells of the thunder-chanting sea;—we have changed our sex a thousand times like the angels of the Talmud; and we shall continue the everlasting transmigration long after the present universe has passed away and the fires of the stars have burned themselves out. Can one know these things and laugh at the theories of the East?"

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

To form a strong desire is to make a bargain with Nature's law. You are sure to have your desire satisfied in some way, for you have generated a force which must be balanced.

Are you sure you really wish your desire to be granted? Would you like to be custodian of great wealth or be obliged to live through sense gratifications of one or another type?

If humanity could know the value of freedom from the karmic attachments to things and acts people would cease to build up mountains of desire.

The practical psychologists of to-day are asking their followers to present their demands to nature and promise they will get them! Yes, but at what a cost of bondage to them!

Learn rather to act free of desire!

W. V-H.

*THE VALUE OF CEREMONIAL
IN THE CONDUCT OF LIFE*

The conduct of life as a ceremonial is not so popular now as it has been in some other ages of the world's history. The examples which rulers, courts and the aristocracy have set to the world for the orderly and ceremonial succession of its acts have been rejected for the simpler methods of the bourgeoisie. The demand that effort shall be productive of immediate results of value has had its due result in giving men the ideal of quick and practical ends rather than that of dignified and permanent construction. To-day we set up a temporary sheet-steel meeting-house instead of a time-defying cathedral.

Democracy has its uses and one of them is to break up the overgrown and crystallized forms of the past. But the process may be overdone; the treasured methods of our ancestors ought not to be too lightly cast aside. The world has need of orderly and dignified procedure. The value of the modes of doing things should be no less recognized than the value of the product of effort. If one looks back over a year of his past he does not estimate its import solely by the fruit of his labors but also by his joy and satisfaction in being and doing. We make much of our impression upon the world by our mode of being and doing. Many of the greatest men have left but little of the work of their own hands but have been loved and treasured through the ages because they themselves lived great.

If living and life are valued will not living and life be thought worth offering to God, to the

Law, to the world or to the Not-self as each man sees himself set in the midst of spiritual and material environment? The supreme joy of our thesis lies in the fact that humanity can walk, if it will, without the crutches of religions and schemes of philosophy, at least for part of the way.

Science, strong in its clinging to the value of truth, broke the shackles of religion for Western men and set free the soul of humanity for the living and studying of life. It now sets undue value on the immediate product of human effort and the demands of war-times emphasize this material view. Religions still cry, "Without us you cannot be saved!" The fact is, as you may see for yourself, that life lived in the likeness of God's ceremonial life is salvation itself.

What would man's struggle for freedom be worth if, in the end, we are to find ourselves slaves of the spirit? Shall we not find ourselves in the vast spiritual realms above as free as we are upon the sea? And, if we then ally ourselves with great movements and activities, shall it not be of our own free will and shall we not feel that we still have our heart's inner longing for our own?

In future ages the value of life will be better understood and more appreciated than it is to-day. It will then be known by men that regular and rhythmic steps in life are needed, not the inharmonious and broken trample of the mob. Life as an offering to God will be lived as a sacred sacrifice and it will be ordered with patient forethought. In the later ages of the world human life will be of supreme joy and happiness; but that will mean that harmony, order and due

sequence of action must be understood, be appreciated and be permitted to prevail among men.

The angels or devas feel rhythm, ceremonial and order to be of their very life. We are to be collaborators with them; we are to share the responsibilities of the world's government with them and it would be but logical that we shall learn and put in practice the methods and ways of life that are normal to them.

The greatest aid in the realization of the plans of God for men comes from the anticipation of God's wishes and from putting them into practice, wherever possible, in advance of their time of necessary use. This is the age in which ceremonial ways are rather despised than cherished; we who understand should leave our pride in short-cut brevity of method and study how to apply forces by the patient upbuilding of plans and the storing of force until, in the ceremonial hour, we may discharge them with the aid of devas with whom we have patiently learned to co-operate and whom we have sometimes taught methods that are in accord with our ways of life and effort.

W. V-H.

THE STUDY OF THOUGHTS

Those who have learned from books or teachers of soul science that man has in his personality a definite part called the mental body which deals with the activities of thought, and that this mental body is able to have a real life of its own, after the physical body has died and the emotions discarded,—those students naturally wish to find for themselves sufficient evidence of the truth of these statements. While their teachings may have the air of authority and reasonableness, yet it is felt as most desirable that one should obtain personal and direct verification of such very startling things as tell about the constitution of man.

Happily it is easily within the powers of any intelligent person to test the teachings of the reality of thoughts and their relation to the mind. Every normal average man has abundant opportunities for making a careful study of these most interesting phases of human life in his own field of experience. There is only one necessary qualification: a real and permanent interest in the study of man's complex being.

How should the student proceed to study his own mental activities with the purpose of learning definite facts about his mental body? The first thing to do is thoroughly to familiarise himself with the whole scheme of teachings on this subject as found in such books as *Man and His Bodies* and *Thought Power, Its Control and Culture*, both written by a recognised authority, Mrs. Besant. Having in mind this philosophy of man's nature and constitution, the student will then make a study of his own thoughts, how they arise, change

and are finally dropped out of his field of consciousness. This can be done in a curious way: the student divides his consciousness and with a higher part of himself he watches the activities in which the other, lower part is engaged.

It is not difficult to recognise the fact that all human thoughts fall into one or other of two great classes: they are either concrete or abstract. A concrete thought is one which is about a definite thing which has form, shape and color,—in short, objectivity. If we think about anything that has to do with our daily life and activity in the world around us, we are thinking concrete thoughts. The abstract thought is about something which has not fixed form or shape, but deals with what may be called principles and character qualities, such as truth, justice, sympathy, statesmanship, roundness, delicacy, humor. They are inclusive thoughts, naming that characteristic which is the bond that unites many concrete thoughts.

The first thing for the student to do is to learn clearly the distinction between these two great classes of thought. He should also try to verify for himself the fact that, in spite of its elusiveness, the abstract thought is of a higher order. This is true because it includes within it a great number of particular, concrete thoughts. He should not fall into the error of regarding abstract thought as more unreal than concrete thought, merely because of the fact that abstract thoughts may seem to be vague and indefinite. This is simply a matter of training, and a strong thinker in philosophy can recognise that his own abstract thoughts have greater reality and greater power than those which are embodied in forms or images.

Concrete thoughts have the same characteristics as other objective things,—they may seem strong for a time but they are subject to the destructive actions of nature which will bring about changes and finally the complete disintegration and dissolution of a concrete thought. On the other hand, abstract thoughts seem to have a remarkable permanence: our conception of them may grow and become more beautiful, but they, in themselves seem to be endowed with permanence of being. They live throughout the ages.

A very important thing to do is to make great efforts, extended over many years if necessary, to be able to determine, whenever one so desires, whether the thought arose from within one's own consciousness or from the outside world. This requires constant practice and will lead finally to a very keen sense of discrimination. The tests which may be applied had best be worked out by the student himself, but a few general hints may be given. As a general rule, if the thought which has arisen appears to be quite new, or to have a certain quality of surprise in it, then it is likely to have come from the outside. But if it appears very smoothly and gradually in our consciousness, then it is likely that it arose within our own consciousness. Often one is able to pick out those elements which have been added to a thought by one's self, either consciously or by the action of the associative workings of the mind.

Another important element to distinguish is to recognise those thoughts which other people think about us. This is perhaps one of the easiest of all mental exercises of this kind, for such thoughts usually have about them some qualities which at

once suggest the personality of the thinker, who can hardly avoid "giving himself away" to the student who is careful in his analysis of thoughts and feelings, and can keep his own bodies quiet.

One of the most valuable of all self-training exercises is to think clearly, sharply and definitely. If the thought is concrete the thinker should hold it in his mind and make it so strong and full of life that it may be seen as a picture or space-image in the mind, having almost as strong an appearance of objectivity as if it were an actual physical object. When once the student has learned to make a clear, sharp image which he can "see" and "feel" in consciousness, then he can change it about and modify it in many ways, studying both himself and how he does it.

If the student makes it a constant practice to study his own thoughts he will soon realise that he often thinks thoughts about himself which later on, at appropriate times, re-appear in his consciousness and act as powerful forces to lead him in their own directions. In very fact, all of us put life and energy into our thoughts and that energy sometimes returns and reacts upon us.

Now what is true for him about his own thought of himself, is also true for other people about whom he thinks. Thus it may be easily verified that our thought very powerfully affects others and may lead them into certain courses of action. It is clear, then, that we are responsible for those thoughts which we think about others. And the law of karma sees to it that we get appropriate reactions even in these cases, and they may at times return with surprising swiftness.

C. S.

COSMIC EVOLUTION

All about us we see the evidences of material evolution going on. The forms of plants and animals are quite evidently improving through mutation after mutation. And the knowledge of the Divine Wisdom that we possess holds no more precious treasure than the facts it gives about the evolution of souls. The whole scheme of our solar system and its progress in evolution is entrancing beyond expression.

It seems true that each solar system is one of a group of systems forming together a larger aggregation that may be called a universe. And all the universes, which when seen at the limit of telescopic vision are nebulae, make up the cosmos.

We cannot doubt that the groups we call universes are evolving since their units, the solar systems, are doing so. And so the whole cosmos must be swiftly moving through evolutionary change from perfection to perfection.

Probably new-formed nebulae, with their groups of physically manifest suns and planets, are constantly coming into such being as we can observe. Most of these seemingly new nebulae are no doubt "reincarnations" of preceding nebulae that had gone into the resting state for an enormous period of time. But we must suppose that some, probably relatively small nebulae, are new, that is composed for the first time by logoi who have segregated their systems, for reasons unknown to us, from antecedent logoi to form the new and, as it were, independent nebular group.

The newly formed nebulae must be obliged to start under such difficulties as belong to all beginnings, just as must be the case with those newly segregated solar systems with their logoi who previously had never had charge of such systems but had been, perhaps, second to paternal logoi under whom they were trained.

Such newly formed organizations of solar systems and of nebulae no doubt represent the earlier and more difficult phases of evolution within the cosmos, where occurs the maximum of suffering for such types of entities as are like our own humanity.

But, if the humanities have great trials, struggles and suffering, they have the glory and joy of leading the great streams of beings with which they have come forward through the illimitable depths of time through which the life of system following system has passed in the being of Brahma.

How old is our solar system? I wonder how long our Logos has reigned over His mighty aggregation and what His relations are with the other logoi and the supreme Head of our nebula! Can we dream of the interactions between the Logoi of nebulae or universes, of what Their labors are or what their problems? They must be conscious vividly and utterly of Brahma, of that life and being that are for us unknowable, ineffable, forming the basis of all that exists within and beyond space. Perhaps our cosmos is a void in some vaster body and there are other hollows in it that hold still other cosmoses.

Is it not a marvel that we of our globe live like ants interested in the grains of dust among

which we strain while there is so much that is great and interesting, above and beyond us? So engrossed with the little that men falter when they begin to look into the worlds of spirit, even into the nearest one. Our solar system is almost a mystery to us; as theosophists we have but studied the alphabet of its spiritual nature. The fate of planet is linked to the fate of planets and the sun, and our life depends on their life; theirs is ours. When we gain the god-like power that is given to all earnest students of the divine wisdom to leave the physical body in sleep and range the world we begin the proper study of our planet, we get new conceptions of its physical nature, of its relations to that spiritual matrix in which it is set and from which it draws its forces of being. One does not then shrink from a knowledge of the denizens of that spirit world nor does he fear to look on into his own future of growth into its interesting complex life. This new expansion of powers takes one out of the narrowness of neighborhood and national life and into a world conception and activity.

Initiation carries man a great step forward in both powers and conceptions, and gives him the privilege and ability to range through the solar system and to visit and study the other planets. And, in the same way, as he grows from step to step, he finds his duties carry him into the necessities of the great spiritual process that underlies the succession of life activities throughout our solar system. But scarcely has he begun to assume these responsibilities when he may take cognizance of the corresponding life of other suns and their attendant planets!

What would our evolution be if it did not stretch forward into the illimitable, carrying us away from petty littleness of body-interest into the infinite realms of spiritual responsibility, satisfaction and association!

W. V-H.



VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Among the many philosophies which have been developed by those thinkers who have wished to build up a mental conception of the nature of the universe and its living beings, the time-honored Vedânta holds a unique place. It is not only a philosophy but a synthesis of philosophies, a philosophy of philosophies; it would not be inappropriate to call it a super-philosophy.

To understand its historical development it is necessary to know something of the ancient Aryan religion and its most ancient scriptures, the Vedas. Hinduism is pre-eminently the religion of individual duty, or that which would best conduce to the growth and evolution of each human being in whatever place he finds himself. The Vedas consist of sacred hymns and chants used in connection with ceremonies and sacrifices. They carry much of the potency of sound, that is, they have power to influence the living forces and energies of nature, which are themselves living or manifestations of life. Their object was to harmonise

man with nature, to procure the fulfilment of his desires for temporal benefits or rewards in heaven.

There are six well-known systems of philosophy which are based on the Vedas and other scriptures of Hinduism. Of these the Vedânta is the highest: it is all-inclusive and absolute. Its name means that it is the end and aim of the Vedas or the Vedic religion. It might be called Absolute Idealism, or the philosophy of ultimate realities, of the Eternal, the Unmanifest, called Brahman, or the Self.

The point of view of the Vedânta is so lofty and ethereal that its deeper teachings are difficult to grasp by one who is still at home in the lower, illusory, relative realities of ordinary human life. It admits all lower realities in their limited realms of consciousness, the worlds of ordinary experience, but it explains them by a system in which the ordinary conceptions of space, time and matter and ordinary modes of thought are dissolved away, leaving nothing but the Absolute Self. All ideas of separateness and separated living beings, all notions of you, I, they, yourself, myself, themselves, are only illusory fragments of the Self.

The following material is condensed from Geo. Thibaut's translation of Shankarâchârya's *Commentary on the Vedânta Sûtras*. Shankara lived and taught some time after the life of the Lord Buddha, and his keen, subtle philosophy was in part intended to counteract the increasing influence of the Buddhist ethical philosophy, which at that time threatened completely to eclipse the older Vedantic system.

The great philosopher begins with the consecrating formula, "Reverence to the August Lord

of All!" and introduces his commentary with the following exposition of the cause of the false knowledge which prevails in the world.

It is matter not requiring any proof that the Universal Self and non-intelligent objects cannot be identified. All the less can their respective attributes be identified. Hence it follows that it is wrong to superimpose the object and its attributes upon the Self, and vice versa.

In spite of this it is on the part of man a natural procedure—which has its cause in wrong knowledge—not to distinguish the two entities (object and subject) and their respective attributes, although they are absolutely distinct, but to superimpose upon each the characteristic nature and the attributes of the other, and thus, coupling the Real and the Unreal, to make use of such expressions as "That is mine," or "I am hungry."

What is this superimposition? It is the apparent presentation, in the form of remembrance, to consciousness of something previously observed in some other thing.

How is it possible that on the interior Self which itself is not an object of knowledge there should be superimposed objects and their attributes? The Self is not non-object in the absolute sense. It is the object of the notion of the Ego, and the interior Self is well known to exist on account of its immediate, intuitive presentation.

Learned men consider this superimposition to be Nescience (*avidyâ*), and the ascertainment of the true nature of that which is superimposed on the Self, they call knowledge (*vidyâ*).

But how, since it is the function of the means of right knowledge to determine truth and reality, can the means of right knowledge (perception, inference, etc., and scriptural texts) have for their object that which is dependent on Nescience?

Because, the Vedantist replies, the means of right knowledge cannot operate unless there be a knowing personality, and because the existence of the latter depends on the erroneous notion that the body, the senses, and so on, are identical with, or belong to, the Self of the knowing person. For without the use of the senses,

perception and the other means of right knowledge cannot operate. And without a basis, that is, the body, the senses cannot act. Nor does anybody act by means of a body on which the nature of the Self is not superimposed. Nor can the Self, which in its own nature is free from all contact, become a knowing agent in the absence of the mutual superimposition of the Self and the Non-Self and their attributes. And if there is no knowing agent the means of right knowledge cannot operate, as said above.

Hence perception and the other means of right knowledge, and the Vedic texts have for their object that which is dependent on Nescience. That human cognitional activity necessarily presupposes the superimposition as described above, follows also because men do not differ from animals in that respect. Animals, when sounds or other sensible qualities affect their sense of hearing or other senses, recede or advance according as the idea derived from the sensation is a comforting or disquieting one. Thus men, who possess a higher intelligence, also run away when they see strong fierce-looking fellows drawing near with shouts and brandishing swords; while the confidently approach persons of contrary appearance and behavior. We thus see that men and animals follow the same course of procedure with reference to the means and objects of knowledge. Now it is well known that the procedure of animals is based on the non-distinction of Self and Non-Self; we therefore conclude that, as they present the same appearances, men also—although distinguished by superior intelligence—proceed with regard to perception and so on, in the same way as animals do; as long, that is to say, as the mutual superimposition of Self and Non-Self lasts.

It is true that the reflecting man who is qualified to enter upon ceremonial activities prescribed by religious texts well knows that the Self of man is related to a higher world than that of ordinary life; yet that qualification does not depend on the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, as being free from all wants, and transcending transmigratory existence, which knowledge may be derived from the Vedânta texts. For such know-

ledge is useless to formal religion and it even contradicts the injunctions of priestcraft to perform certain sacrificial action and enjoy their results. And before such true knowledge of the Self has arisen the various scriptures, such as the Vedas, continue to deal with objects dependent on Nescience. For such injunctions as "A Brahmana is to sacrifice" are operative only on the supposition that on the Self are superimposed particular conditions, such as caste, stage of life, age, external circumstances, etc.

It has already been explained that by superimposition is meant the notion of something in some other thing. [This notion affects almost all activities of ordinary life, but is false from the standpoint of the higher knowledge.] The superimposition of the Non-Self upon the Self will be understood more definitely from the following examples. Extra-personal attributes are superimposed on the Self if a man considers himself sound and entire, or the contrary, as long as his wife, children, and so on, are sound and entire or not. Attributes of the body are superimposed on the Self, if a man thinks of himself (his Self) as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking or jumping. Attributes of the sense-organs are superimposed, if he thinks "I am mute, or deaf, or one-eyed, or blind"; and attributes of the internal organ, if he considers himself subject to desire, intention, doubt, determination, and so on. Thus the producer of the notion of the ego (that is, the internal organ) is superimposed on the interior Self, which, in reality, is the witness of all the modifications of the internal organ, and *vice versa* the interior Self, which is the witness of everything, is superimposed on the internal organ, the senses, and so on. In this way there goes on this natural, continual superimposition, which appears in the form of wrong conception, is the cause of individual souls appearing as agents and enjoyers of the results of their actions, and is observed by every one.

With a view to freeing one's self from that wrong notion (separated life) which is the cause of all evil and attaining thereby the knowledge of the absolute unity of the Self, the study of the Vedânta texts is begun.

C. S.

GOOD FRIDAY

The agony of the night was upon me. My flesh, restless with weary tossing, cried out for relief from its misery. My mind worn weary with the torture of personal problems asked but a moment's stillness to soothe its hot feverishness.

But most oppressive of all was that sensation of the overhanging pall under which millions of others were suffering like myself. All around there was no light,—only darkness made visible.

Then, all of a sudden, out of the dense darkness came a whisper, "Others."

Forgetting my own pain and misery I sought ways and means to make the burden a little easier for those around. There were many like myself laboring at this task, I found, and in the heart of each of us glowed a tiny rosy light. But all the lights could not make the darkness bearable. Heavily the pall pressed upon us. In vain were all our schemes and plans. "To do the best we can" was the highest height our philosophy could reach.

"Is there no other way?," my heart cried out and, apart from the crowd around me I knelt down to pray. Looking up I perceived that the pall which seemed to oppress the world so heavily wore the shape of a cross and as I gazed it grew faintly luminous.

Then on my arm I felt the touch I had learned to love and longed for. A swift flight upwards, and we looked down upon the pall—now a cross glowing with golden light. My heart grew exquisitely still and only my eyes asked the question nearest my heart of my radiant companion.

"They" was his triumphant reply, which rang out like silver clarion call across the distances of space.

I looked up and, lo!, the cross had changed into a star, and above and around I became conscious of many beings, radiant and lovely beyond human words and beside me stood others less radiant but also lovely and exquisite in their devotion to Them. Then I became conscious that through the body of each of us passed a stream of light from Them and into the darkness beyond the pall which I knew looked so black from the other side. And as the light swept from my bodies all the memories of past sorrows, wrongs and deprivations, there was born the irresistible longing to send some of this light out to others.

And then, marvel of marvels!, there were no "others," there was only the "One." Connected with "Them" by the power of a great white light, we could also become conscious of "others" at will and, best of all, had the power to help them in their problems.

Then I understood the answer to my prayer. Devotion to "Them" was the way of swifter and quicker evolution for humanity.

Maya.



THE KERNEL IN THE NUT

Is there one big unsolved equation in your mind? And is there a thought, an idea, that, held in mind, would help more than any other one thing to solve the riddle of the universe?

Most of us abhor a man of one idea, or hobby. We feel intuitively that this world is not a simple matter, but a very complex affair. Laws so interplay that nearly every decree of science has a qualifying "other things being equal." Yet withal we are constantly prompted to look for a solution of life's mystery. We sometimes wonder if the solution is wrapped up in the silence of the Egyptian Sphinx. Did those builders of old (and we built those monuments, when you come to think of it) have knowledge that we have lost? In our long march down the centuries have we forgotten the most important thing we ever knew and which if possessed now would correctly solve the problem of existence?

We are prone to think that the answer to a perfected existence lies in external conditions, and we form different kinds of governments and enact various laws. But soon things are again awry, and we are just about where we started from. We tried monarchy and that failed. Then we thought that democracy was the cure for all the ills that the human race is heir to, only to find on the eve of making democracy universal that we do not get good government by simply counting empty heads. We have learned that government is a science, and that no matter how large a factor you multiplied nothing by, you do not get knowledge. And so we go from one form

to another, from one law to another, hoping finally to reach the ideal plan.

But it isn't the form or plan on which we work that matters most. It is the kind of people that use any plan that produces the result. We are continually looking for something outside when the cause of the failure is within. But what is the thing that will change the people and produce the result we desire? In other words, what is the kernel in the nut?

There are two basic views of life, and everything that a man says or does is based on one or the other of these two views. One view of life is called the idea of Separateness; the other is called the idea of Unity. These two views ramify the whole human fabric, and the source from which any thread sprang can be traced by the color given to it at its inception. Acts born of the idea of separateness cannot give the same results as those prompted by the idea of oneness.

The idea of Unity is that we are all of one life, and that while we inhabit individualized bodies yet the life that sustains and flows through each is a part of the life of the universe, and all of us, being partakers of that same life, are one with it and each other. When one gets this idea, or view-point, it is only a short step to the corollary statement that we are the other fellow. Seen from this angle we realize that the largest part of ourselves is really outside our bodies.

"Foregoing self, the Universe grows I."

Then instead of considering and doing everything for the self within, we begin to do all things for the Self without. We can help in this realization if we say to ourselves continually, "I am

that man." Walt Whitman puts it thus: "I feel I am of them—And henceforth I will not deny them—for how can I deny myself?"

There is another thought that is helpful along this line. We are in the midst of a big scheme of progressive growth on this planet. We all are parts of this scheme of evolution, and the failure of any part is a failure of the whole. This being the case, the chief business of life should be that of helping the continued growth and evolution of all the parts, or centers of life we are able to touch. In other words, we should put over as many men as we can. The failure of any man is our failure. The success of every man is our success. The successful outcome of the system is dependent on the success or failure of its parts. If we wish a perfected whole we must have perfected parts. In this light we work for the completion of this scheme of evolution, giving our attention to those parts of life we can best reach.

This idea of Unity is the golden thread that runs through your life and mine, and this is the kernel in the nut of universal existence. Once we get people looking at things in this light, little will we care for systems of government or kinds of laws. Let me say again, it is man more than the form of government that counts. Undoubtedly at certain stages of evolution one form of government may aid evolution better than another, but we must not make a mistake in centering all our attention on the outward form. Let us emphasize the fact that we are all one life, and that we rise and fall together. Let us realize that this applies to nations as to individuals.

Fred Humphrey.

EXPANDING ONE'S VIEW OF LIFE

At the dedication of a new theosophical lodge room in England, October 15, 1919, Mrs. Annie Besant was reported in *The Vahan* as having said, in part:

Many people in a lodge think that unanimity of opinion is valuable. Personally I think exactly the opposite; I think the more diversity of opinion you have, the better for the members of the lodge, because it is not by hearing things repeated over and over again that you really increase your knowledge or hold on great truths, but it is by different views, different ways of looking at things, by all those points that arise from the diversity of man. . . The more we have studied, and the more we know, the more we find out how very, very much the outlook on truth changes, as we gradually develop ourselves more and more in power of grasp, and in development of insight.

There are many things which are true, says reincarnation, but one's understanding of reincarnation, the effect it has on the whole of one's life which is influenced, changes as one begins to enlarge the consciousness, to expand the power of thought, to see things in a larger way, in a way which is less incomplete. I take reincarnation as an instance of what I mean, because it makes such an enormous difference, in understanding reincarnation and getting help from it, whether you are looking at things from the center of the relatively permanent man, or the circumference of the changing personality. If you begin to look at reincarnation, as from the standpoint

of the lasting part of you, that immortal, spiritual intelligence, really yourself, you will find then that reincarnation looks so extraordinarily different (from what it does) when you are looking at it through the physical mind, and thinking of it from the conventional standpoint of that brain. Reincarnation very often repels people in the West, when they first hear of it. They think of it as instituting a view of life which to them takes away the very essential feature of that life, as they think, namely, memory. Of course, when you study memory, you find that as far as the present life is concerned, you have forgotten more than you remember; certain salient things stand out, but when you begin to try to extend things you remember, then you become conscious of the enormous extent of forgetfulness. You have kept a sense of continuity; you have not kept anything which can be looked on as a complete memory of the past. As some of you may know, it is a very interesting fact, if you were mesmerised, thrown into a trance, and asked about your past life in your present incarnation, you would tell all kinds of things that normally you have forgotten; you look back into childhood, and tell them of things which have quite passed away from your ordinary memory. That has been done over and over again. You don't really forget. When the memory of events goes below the surface of the waking consciousness, and you are not aware of them, they are all there. Often looking at it from that standpoint, people have an idea they change in different lives. They feel as if they would not be the same individuals, but as they gradually learn to raise their center of con-

sciousness from the ordinary, everyday, waking consciousness to the more hidden, but more real, immortal consciousness, which is theirs, then they find that reincarnation takes on the view that they simply come to this world for a very short time in order to obtain experience, and they gradually come to look upon themselves as persons who dip down into this world for a short time in order to get food to build up, and, carrying that food away with them, they go into another very much happier and wider state of existence, building it into power and faculty; when (that is done) they return for another meal of experience down here; and as life comes to assume to them that view, they find that this world goes into its proper place, wonderfully useful, wonderfully interesting, but useful and interesting because it can teach them so much that they can turn into faculty after they have left it, so that they continually return very much more patient, very much purer in their emotions, as much more useful in their thought; and that that continual widening out and growth in intellectual, moral, and spiritual stature is really the purpose of their living here, so that they become continually more useful, and they learn time after time continually to be wiser, stronger, more helpful.

If you can get a number of people who see things from a different standpoint, you will find that that in itself will widen out, enlarge your own view. Remember, the people who help you are not the people who agree with you, but the people who disagree with you. While you may be strengthened in what you think by those who think like you, you learn to think more truly, more fully,

when you are continually with those with whom you disagree. If you can get to the point when they entirely lose the power to annoy you, when you are less inclined to get angry with them, you can look on them as very valuable teachers. So far as you are concerned, the most disagreeable people are then the people you most need to be with, because they give you the opportunity of developing in yourselves certain qualities, which you could not develop otherwise, if you are with people who are always kindly and thoughtful, always agreeing with you, so that life is made to you easy, but does not develop you to the same extent, does not do you the same good living here, you will find.

Cultivate in your lodge this diversity of opinion and the reality of tolerance. By tolerance I mean mutual respect, not the kind of condescending attitude. Not wise people, but people who think themselves wise, assume toward those who differ from them, the attitude of "You are all wrong, but still I am a wide-minded person. You don't know it now, but presently you will find it out." I do not mean that kind of thing; I mean real tolerance,—seeing in every person the Self, and not wanting to interfere with the way the Self seeks for developing his own faculty and powers, which is his own way of growth, his own method of evolution; and that your relationship with anyone should be that of helping that Self, never trying to push, constrain or restrain in any fashion. It is that feeling of respect for the individuality of another, which is one of the great signs of those who are really more advanced in spiritual life.