

THE VAHAN.



A VEHICLE FOR THE INTERCHANGE OF

THEOSOPHICAL NEWS AND OPINIONS.

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Members and others are invited to send opinions and questions on Theosophical subjects, notes on current Theosophical literature, reports of activities, cultivos of general interest from papers, etc., for insert on in the VAHAN to W. R. OLD, Gen. Secretary British Section T. S., 19, Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

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NO. 5.

THE ENQUIRER.

QUERY.—*In some passages of the "Secret Doctrine" the word "Monad" is used in the plural. Thus on page 266, Vol. I, the Monads spoken of as reëmerging from the paranirvanic state, which is said to be "limited in eternity." Except for this discretive phrase, it would be natural to suppose the Monad to be universally one and the same. How is this explained?*

ANS.—When the word *Monad* is used in the plural it refers only to the rays of the universal Soul, Alaya, which invest differentiated matter with its essential life principle, not to the universal Soul itself, which is, as you surmise, essentially *one*; just as the sun's rays are homogeneous in their root nature, though when differentiated, they appear as electricity, light, and heat, when acting in the different conditions of physical ether, *i.e.*, the inter-molecular plenum of science.

QUERY.—*Of the higher triad, Atmâ-Buddhi-Manas, I suppose the Manas only is specialized or individualized in us. But there is circulation, and as progress goes on, may not Buddhi at least take colour from Manas?*

ANS.—Atmâ-Buddhi is unconscious in matter, and matter unconscious *per se*. When the Ego—Manas—*i.e.*, the discretional, self-conscious, and rational principle, comes in to form the connecting link, then both spirit and matter are awakened, and begin thenceforth

to acquire individualized powers of cognition, each according to its nature. Previous to this the Cosmic Mind is alone responsible for what we know as chemical affinity, instinct, natural selection, etc. It is only when the universal Mind begins to radiate, and when its rays fall into matter, that conscious individuality begins to manifest as a factor (the all-important one for us) in the evolutionary scale of Being; and not until matter has been wrought to that degree of sensibility and organic quality which renders it capable of the reception of Manas, does the Manasa-putra, or "Mind-born son of Mahat," begin to inform the animal soul of incipient humanity. The Monad is devoid of cognition whilst immersed in matter, until the manasic entity comes in to complete the rapport, so to speak. The Manas is that "Prometheus who stole the fire of the gods, and brought it down to earth and taught men how to use it." By his union with Asia is intended the incarnation of the "Mind-born," for Asia represents nature, in its specialized human form.

QUERY.—*What are the causes of Reincarnation, and what are the laws which control the selection of environment in the individual case?*

ANS.—The effect in view is doubtless progress or evolution. The conditions which afford individual progress are various according to the state of the Ego, *i.e.*, its degree of enlightenment, and hence its needs. Speaking generally, we may say that the position is as follows: Apart from actual knowledge of the laws governing this process in nature, knowledge arising from (a) retrospective intuition, and (b) historical or other practical corroboration,—it is claimed that the self-conscious entity, Manas, attains consciousness only through simultaneous contact of two opposing conditions or states of being, spirit on the one hand, and matter on the other; the diffused and the concrete, the illimitable and the defined,—in fact all the pairs of *opposites* in nature which are, during incarnation alone, simultaneously within the radius of its cognition. In the process of reincarnation two main causes are at work: *necessity*, as appertaining to conditioned life, and *desire*, as the product of individuality. The laws which include and direct these causes into effect are Karma and Affinity. Individual Karma cannot transcend the law of Universal Life manifestations. We are told that each manifestation of the universe is "successively upon a higher scale," and if there be a universal evolution, or such a progression as is implied by these words, then there must of necessity be an individual evolution, for whatever we conceive of the universe as a whole we necessarily are forced to regard as applicable to the Ego as an integral part thereof. Thus, forced to incarnate in obedience to the universal law of periodic manifestation, the Ego is guided by the law of *affinity* to incarnate under certain conditions and into

certain psychic and physical environments, for according to the law of the "conservation of energy" it operates along the lines of least resistance; and this we may regard as *affinity*, whether noëtic, psychic, kamic, or physical.

QUERY—Is it possible to reconcile the statement in the Decalogue that the Lord "visits the sins of the fathers upon the children," etc., with the recognized justice of God?

ANS.—Although the "justice of God" does not appear conspicuous from even a deep reading of the *Hebrew Scriptures*, yet one may safely say that there is nothing inconsistent in the statement of the Decalogue, when properly understood, with the inviolable laws of nature by which we are able to affirm the manifest justice of that Divine Intelligence which underlies them. Apart from the law of physical heredity, which is usually supposed to be referred to, there is another and more important aspect of this important teaching, which is equally true in its application to the individual. It is the occult teaching that the Tanhic elementals generated during the past life of the Lower Ego (Kama-Manas) are responsible for the fabrication of the new vesture of the reïncarnating Ego, from the materials supplied by the physical parents. Thus in the *Book of Enoch*, cap. xiv, we read: "They use the materials which are at hand, fabricating organs for themselves by instinct, and in the appointed hour are born in the shape which they have formed for themselves. For man giveth not life to man, but the means only of developing life, and every man now living was the sculptor of his own body and organs. And this one maketh himself comely, and this one formeth himself unto learning, and this one fabricates organs that degrade him, and this one is imperfect because he is unskilful." Read *Key to Theosophy*, p. 138 *et seq.*, also p. 351, Vol. I, *Isis Unveiled*, substituting "lower Ego" for "astral monad," and "cycle" for "planet," according to the later *dictum* of the authoress. From these particulars it will be seen that the incarnating Ego is the father of its own future terrestrial existence, and the son of its past; and Karma does indeed thus "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children."

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC.

The *Path* for January contains an article on "Mount Meru," which is deeply suggestive, and full of interest in the clue which it supplies as to the use of several of the *keys* in the interpretation of the ancient legend from the *Mahabharata*. Mount Meru is geographically the North Pole, but inasmuch as all the *seven keys*, and the *sub-keys*, are

related to each other through the correspondences of nature, every allegory has seven and forty-nine meanings, according to whether it is taken in its cosmic, astronomical, mundane, spiritual, psychical, physical or other aspect. It is very important that the student of the *Secret Doctrine* should understand this law of correspondences, even if he is acquainted with the astral keys only to a very slight extent; for it will prevent him from the common error of materializing the truth by confining it within the limits of a fixed idea or a definite form. It is just because the church has lost these *keys*, and has for centuries confined itself to the literal and historical form of the Old and New Testaments, that religion to-day has become a mere theological jumble of incomprehensible dogmas and formulas. The article in question traces the physiological signification of *Mount Meru*, in the pineal gland and spinal column, and certain electro-spiritual processes which function there. These processes, however, are merely hinted at, as a knowledge of them belongs to Occultism and not to Theosophy. The article, however, is interesting to the intuitional reader, as showing how the deepest spiritual teaching may be hidden under a statement which on the face of it appears to be simply geographical.

"Hidden Hints in the *Secret Doctrine*," are a welcome addition to the matter supplied by the *Path* for Theosophists in general. We may quote the following:

"A PROPHECY.—In the 20th century—1900—the scholars of our era will begin to recognise that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but simply outlined (Vol. I, p. xxxvii, Intro.) In other places the author hints at surprises in store in the way of manuscripts, etc. It would seem that by 1900 some 'discoveries' will be made by scholars that will support our author. 'Once the door permitted to be kept a little ajar, it will be opened wider with every new century. The times are ripe for a more serious knowledge than hitherto permitted.' (Vol. I, p. xxxviii, Intro., note.) 'We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the two races.' (Vol. I, intro., xlv.)"

Can the recent discovery of a "lost" work of Aristotle have any connection with the above prophecy?

"Discernment and Criticism" is an article which every Theosophist would do well to read and ponder—and practice.

A new edition of the *Rig-Veda-Sanhita* has just been issued from the Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund, under the direction of Mr. Tookeram Tatyā. This is such an important and difficult work, that the Theosophical Society may well be congratulated on the success thus achieved in connection with the second of its declared objects. There are eight volumes in the new edition, each comprising an

Ashtaka, and including, besides the well known *Bhashya*, or commentary of Sankaracharya, copious notes from other commentaries, and many of the *Sutras* which are essential to the student. The *Rig-Veda* is generally recognized by scholars as being the oldest sacred record or *scripture* in the world, and it is the fountain-head of all the Sanskrit literature and Aryan religions. It was given to our *fifth* race, nearly 1,000,000 years ago, by their *divine instructors*, according to the teaching of the *Secret Doctrine*. This of course is very far from being admitted by modern Sanskritists and Orientalists, who have no key whatever to the secret meaning of the ancient allegories. Students of the *Secret Doctrine*, however, are somewhat better prepared to penetrate the inner mystery of these records, and may well smile when Max Müller writes: "The *Rig-Veda* exhibits one of the earliest and rudest phases in the history of humanity"; and again: "Of philosophy we find but little, and what we find is still in its germ." Also: "In the hymns of the *Veda* we see man left to himself to solve the riddle of this world. We see him crawling on like a creature of the earth with all the desires and weaknesses of his animal nature." The following is a translation of the 129th Hymn of Book X of the *Rig-Veda*, and is offered by Max Müller as a specimen of the "doubts" of the early poet, who "was not a Gnostic or a pantheistic philosopher." The student should compare it with the first Stanzas from the *Book of Dzryan* in Vol. I of the *Secret Doctrine*, and having learned something of the philosophy of those Stanzas, and the mystery of Parabrahm and of Pralaya and Manvantara, will be able to judge of the value of the above criticism.

"Nor Aught nor Naught existed; yon bright sky
 Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.
 What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?
 Was it the water's fathomless abyss?*"

There was not death—yet was there naught immortal.
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;
 The only One † breathed breathless by itself,
 Other that It there nothing since has been.
 Darkness was there, and all at first was veiled
 In gloom profound—an ocean without light—
 The *germ* that still lay covered in the husk
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
 Then first came love upon it, the new spring
 Of *Mind*—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,
 Pondering, this bond between created things
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth

* *Space* in the *Secret Doctrine* is the *great waters* or *abyss*.

† Parabrahm.

Piercing and all pervading, or from heaven?
 Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—
 Nature below, and power and will above—*
 Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here,
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
 The Gods themselves came later into being—
 Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
 He from whom all this great creation came,
 Whether his will created or was mute.
 The most high seer that is in highest heaven,
 He knows it—or perchance even He knows it not.”

ACTIVITIES.

CHRISTMAS TREE AT THE BOW CLUB.—On Monday evening, January 12, an entertainment was given by some of the members of the Theosophical Society to the women and girls of the Bow Club. The Club now numbers 182 members, almost all of whom were present. The dining-hall was prettily decorated with festoons of paper flowers, made by the girls themselves, and with pictures from the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News*. After tea, a gaily ornamented Christmas tree was lighted up, precautions against any accidents by fire having been quietly but duly taken beforehand, and with the help of two or three members of the T. S. the presents were distributed, each girl receiving a little coloured shawl, or some woollen garment, an apron, necktie, etc. With each present was given an ornamental card with a verse on it. Music and dancing followed; the girls enjoyed themselves to the utmost, and the proceedings were orderly and harmonious throughout. Much valuable and kindly help was given by Miss Williams and Mr. Aldred Williams, Mrs. McDouall, Mrs. Raphael, Mrs. Putz, and Miss Reeves; Mrs. and Miss Elsie Stone sang charmingly in one drawing-room, while Mr. Chapman, of Mile-End, created much merriment in another with shocks from an electric battery. Miss Kislingbury and Messrs. Edge and C. F. Wright, from Headquarters, kindly undertook the task of lighting the Christmas tree and distributing the presents, and Mrs. Lloyd was greatly assisted in the general management of the entertainment by Miss S. Chapman and Miss A. Lyall, forewomen at the match works, where so many of the club members are employed, and by Miss Paxman, Miss Snook, Miss Bromley, and Mrs. Epps, of Anderson's Mackintosh Works. Mrs. W. F. Higgins, Mrs. Imsley, Miss Tisdall, Mrs. Raphael and Mrs. Putz kindly sent parcels of warm clothing and toys, and Mr. Berger a par-

* The quaternary and the triad: □ and △ or together the *septenary*.

cel of groceries. To each and all of these the best thanks of the Club Committee are tendered. The following evening the tree was re-decorated for the little brothers and sisters (aged from one year to seven), of whom about 160 were present. Every child received a toy, an orange, a cracker, and a bag of sweets. Games and dancing occupied the rest of the evening, and all went home thoroughly delighted. The Club is now in good working order, and its advantages are much appreciated. The sewing class and clothing club are becoming popular. Two evenings in each week are devoted to learning music, and two to dancing and games, one to sewing. Some of the ladies mentioned attend regularly to help on these evenings. Mrs. Lloyd would still be glad of a volunteer for Thursday nights, either to teach reading and writing, or to read aloud to the girls.

LECTURE AT STEINWAY HALL.—On Saturday afternoon, January 24, Mrs. Besant delivered a lecture at Steinway Hall on the "Problems of Life and Death." Mrs. Besant began with the story of Paulinus' preaching of Christianity to the early Saxons, when a bird had flown into the lighted hall out of the darkness, and disappeared again into the same. This was taken as a symbol of the "whence and whither" of the human spirit. Mrs. Besant then proceeded to show that the arguments of the materialist are sound as far as they go, but that they are completely nullified if it can be proved that the human consciousness is capable of functioning without the agency of the physical brain. Citing the best proven facts of so-called Spiritualism, namely, those tested and vouched for by Professor Crookes, F.R.S., then those of hypnotism (being only a new word for Mesmerism invented by men of science to save their reputations), the lecturer contended that these illustrate the truth that there exists an entity able to function apart from and above the physical organism, since, as shown in numberless instances, the more the body is paralyzed the better this entity can manifest itself.

Passing on to the last stage, which we call death, Mrs. Besant, in a forcible and eloquent peroration, once more impressed upon her hearers that it is but one of the many changes of this fleeting state which man calls life, and that it does but free the spiritual entity, the *real* man, from the burden of the flesh, and admits him to other states of consciousness, where he finds new means of manifesting on higher planes of existence.

The meeting was well attended, notwithstanding the tempestuous weather, and continual bursts of applause showed that the speaker was not addressing an unsympathetic audience. The chair was taken by Major Hand; among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Bright, Mdme. Antoinette Sterling, Col. and Mrs. Cleather and friends, the Countess Wachtmeister and other members of the T. S., besides a

great number of strangers, many of whom made enquiries at the close of the meeting as to future lectures, and left the hall armed with pamphlets and tracts containing information concerning the Theosophical Society and its teachings.

The Chiswick Lodge was formally inaugurated on the 10th January, when the following officers were elected: President, W. Kingsland; Vice-President, A. A. Harris; Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian, F. L. Gardner. The Countess Wachtmeister, Mr. W. R. Old, and Mr. S. V. Edge attended on behalf of the President and Council of the Society, and presented the Charter of Incorporation.

On the 17th January, Mrs. Besant lectured at the Bedford Park Club, Chiswick, on "Theosophy in Relation to the Occult Side of Nature." Her lecture was greatly appreciated by a crowded audience, and with the exception of a few adverse criticisms at the close of the lecture, which were easily disposed of by Mrs. Besant, it was evident that the great majority were in sympathy with her views and explanations.

A charter was issued on 10th January authorizing the members of the T. S. resident in Bradford to form a Lodge. The inaugural meeting has not yet been held.

Duplicates of this number can be had by sending 2d. in stamps to the General Secretary. Annual subscription, 4/-



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