ANCIENT WISDOM

A monthly journal devoted to teaching theosophical and occult truths

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—Hamlet

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PERSONAL PROBLEMS THEOSOPHICALLY SOLVED

Ill Health (Concluded)

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

It is a tendency of the human mind to oversimplify reasons. If one all- embracing explanation can be found for some baffling phenomenon it will gain more ready acceptance than if the explanation has to do with a multitude of causes. The reason existing for depressions, for instance. One school lays it to natural deflation following the inflation always caused by a war. Another to buyer strikes succeeding on buyer extravagance. A third (believe it or not) to sunspots. There are many schools of thought, each with their pet notions, but of late economic experts have begun to discard the "one cause" explanation and postulate a number of reasons, the sum total of which constitute the collective cause and no one of which by itself would have been sufficient to bring about the situation. We think they are on the right track.

Similarly with ill-health. A sign of wrong thinking, say the Christian Scientists. Sometimes, without doubt, yes. But what about the baby born an incurable (for "Scientists" do not believe in reincarnation). When did the infant start his wrong thinking? During the gestation period? When did he start thinking at all? Obviously that reason is oversimplification. No use to say it was its parents' wrong thought. That takes us right back to the ferociously unjust "visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children."

Pain, say the doctors, is a danger signal so that the person may do something about it. There is the pain of the disease which has progressed so far that nothing can be done about it. True something might have been done about it had it been taken early enough. But why does nature keep it up when nothing whatever can be done except relieve it with opiates and wait for the end? Oversimplification again.

And Theosophists are not guiltless of oversimplification. It is not merely a matter of changing God's wrath into bad karma and God's rewards into good karma. We soon outgrow that childlike conception brought over from our present or former church affiliations. But there is still the subconscious (sometimes the conscious) feeling that ill health is to "punish" us for something

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REAL PROBLEMS OF REINCARNATION

(Continued from Last Month)

1. If genius is the sum total of many lives devoted to one subject—art, music, literature, scientific research or the like—why is it that the genius, who must then be an advanced Ego, sometimes possesses the vices, bad disposition and selfishness of a young soul?

2. If we are usually born in about the same or a little better social station as we occupied in the last earth life, how does this account for the numerous changes in people's circumstances throughout life; also for an advanced soul such as Lincoln being born in poverty?

3. If we have been born and died hundreds of times, would it not seem that at least some vague memory of this past would stay with us, whereas most people have no such memories at all?

4. Many (though not all) very rich people are cold, hard and unscrupulous. If great wealth is the physical recompense of great benevolence, how is it they have changed so much?

5. If the individualization of Egos was a continuing process before it ceased some millions of years ago, then there should be as many advanced Egos as immature ones. Why do the latter, therefore, seem to be so greatly in the majority?

6. If death in infancy is the karma of having caused death through carelessness but without intent, can it happen only once to any one individual, seeing that presumably it would eradicate that particular defect?

7. Why is it necessary to have so many incarnations?

8. Reincarnation is said to result in progressive improvement of the race, but the brutalities of the last war exceeded those of the wars of centuries ago. Where is the improvement?

9. How could a great scientist like Edison have acquired his genius by similar work in many lives when there was no scientific achievement even remotely resembling his at any previous time in history?

10. Disease is gradually being overcome through sanitation, preventive medicine and more healthful living. How then will karma contrive to operate in cases where early death through disease has been "earned" through wrongdoing in a

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GEMS OF OCCULT THOUGHT

By F. MILTON WILLIS

No Effort to Attain can be Wasted

Must the effort we put forth in life cease and pass into nothingness at death? Is this reasonable? Is it just? Is it possible? Intuition says—no. A little knowledge impels us to emphasize how much more reasonable it is to believe that all of our efforts, all of our experiences, all of our thoughts and feelings are in some way recorded within ourselves, and after we have cast off the physical body are worked up into faculty and character that are inalienably ours; and that this faculty, this character and all that we were in earth-life come back with us, after a heaven-life of a length according to our desserts, to be added to by the efforts of another earth-life, and so until mastership, or wisdom supreme, is attained! We may, in solemn truth, become what we will, if we will but be patient. No energy we put forth to *attain,* can be wasted.

If we believe the foregoing, and cease to look upon death as an end-all, so far as our cherished wishes and plans are concerned; if we can feel that death is but birth into another world, where we shall for a while be just what we were here, but freer, and gradually pass farther and farther away from the influences of earth, deeper and deeper into that bliss-consciousness which is in all who are capable of doing even one good deed or having one good thought; if we can believe that in the course of time, having exhausted the store of bliss we have laid up, we shall return to earth to begin (when we have built up our new physical body from infancy to the point at which we can now freely function in it) where we left off in the prime of our previous life on earth; —if we can believe all this, and further that in this new earth-life we must pay some of the debts left over from our former lives on earth, and receive the payments of those who were indebted to us and the recompense for our worthy thoughts, feelings and actions, how just seem the rulings of Providence, how sublimely responsible, how free, how effective we become!

The "one life at a time" objection to rebirth is as sensible as to refuse to save money or provide for the future on the ground that "one day at a time is enough for me."

THE SECRET DOCTRINE SIMPLY EXPLAINED

The "God Sense"

By CHARLES E. LUNTZ

III:12 Then Svabhavat sends Fohat to harden the Atoms . . .

Svabhavat, primeval aether (not our physical ether but the primeval root of matter) is energized by Fohat which H. P. B. defines as "Cosmic Electricity with intelligence." On the physical plane, she points out, this is reflected in the known scientific fact that brain activity produces a discharge of electric current. Through the clairvoyant observations of C. W. Leadbeater and Geoffrey Hodson we now know that the electric current is composed of astral atoms in their free state—discrete particles, as science would call them—operating in an etheric field composed of ultimate physical atoms, the latter themselves each being made up of 49 ultimate astral atoms bound together by Logoic force.

It is therefore quite logical that thought, which originates in the mental body and must pass through the astral body and etheric double of the brain before manifesting in the physical brain, should set up an electrical disturbance on the way.

But Fohat is a very special kind of electricity, the prototype of electricity as we know it. It infuses energy into the "atoms," meaning the primordial stuff infinitely finer than any physical atom; and this material, under the impact of the cosmic electricity, then "scatters" through space.

Has Fohat anything to do with the cosmic rays now known to science but not even guessed at in Blavatsky's day? (Earliest experiments along that line were 12 years after her death.) Most certainly yes, but Fohat is many planes higher than the cosmic ray which, in spite of its stupendous power, is only a pale reflection.. Fohat is the life and power of the Third Logos, which constituted the first great Outpouring.

The Stanza continues:

Each (of the atoms) is a part of the Web (the Universe). Reflecting the "Self-Existent Lord" (Primeval Light) like a Mirror, each becomes in turn a World.

One of the greatest of occult truths. Every point in the Cosmos is the habitat of Spirit. God is Omnipresent. There is no tiniest corner of space in which He is not. The "sensing" of the Divine after which all mystics strive is this realization. He cannot be seen, heard or touched physically. The "God sense" lies only in the realization of His presence. It is the underlying Reality in all manifestation. In theory it should be easy, this realization. It is a demonstrable necessity, a logical certainty. It must be. It is inconceivable that it should not be. It can be argued out, reasoned out. Yet even for the spiritually evolved it is one of the most elusive facts to keep within the consciousness. It keeps getting away. Our workaday world is so matter-of-fact, so prosaic, so very material. Or it seems that way.

The myriad forms of matter are God's garments and we mistake the vestments for the Reality. We deal in the outer, neglect or ignore the inner. Matter we understand, or think we do. It is so solid, so "real," so reliable. Is it? There is nothing so treacherous, so shifting, so unreliable as physical matter. It is not even solid, as physicists well know. It is mostly holes, with here and there some electric charges. That is matter. And physical circumstance is even less real though we try to fathom its laws, talk glibly of the voice of experience. Experience alone is not enough. What has our experience in two world wars done for us as we busily make preparations for a third? What has the collective experience of the race for thousands of years of the folly and heartbreak of war done to teach it to live in peace?

Hitler, Goering, Goebbels were "experienced". Where did their "experience" land them? Messers. Stalin and Molotov are very "experienced" in their particular arts. And their "experience" has contrived to make the greater part of the world suspicious of them and of their country. Their "experience" bids fair so to antagonize other nations that already there is wholesale talk that war with Russia is virtually a foregone conclusion, with only the time element in doubt. Is this the best that "experience'" can do?

Nature seems to take ironic delight in demonstrating to the tough gentry whose god is experience how feeble is the deity in which they put their trust. Experience is not the answer to life's problems but is a tool of the gods for our shaping. It is tough in action and very, very slow, but over long periods of time it does get some results. Even as to war this is true. Once wars were considered inevitable. Now, in spite of national and international folly, the theoretical possibility at least of permanent peace is recognized. But experience of the appalling consequences of war will not bring this about. Nations have known that since the first war that was ever fought. It will take something more.

It will take *realization,* with nations as with individuals, of the Oneness of races with each other because all are one in God and He is in every race, every man and every pinpoint of matter. That realization may be a long way off for nations. It need not be for individuals. You and I can realize it now, any time, and as we realize so shall we grow spiritually, improve intellectually, stabilize emotionally and renew physically.

It is indescribably amazing that the Stanzas of Dzyan, at least 20,000 years old, should refer to each atom as a "world." It is that, and each physical atom is more than a world, it is a solar system. The electrons (astral atoms) of which it is composed revolve around a central nucleus exactly as the planets revolve about the sun. The relative distances between them are as great as the distances between the planets. But how did the author or authors of the Stanzas know this when the scientists even of Blavatsky's day had not yet begun to suspect it?

Verily science should cease its infelicitous ridicule of occultism, which has established times without number that it *knows* what science will discover centuries later. Proficient though science is in many fields, skilled and expert in its manipulation of matter once it has unveiled the laws governing a specialized department of matter, it might have unveiled some of those secrets much earlier had it condescended to heed the voice crying in the wilderness, of the despised Blavatsky.

(To be Continued)

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★ ★ ★

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PERSONAL OPINIONS

By L. W. Rogers

The Masters

Last month in this column a very brief reference was made to a very important fact—far too important to be bypassed without especial comment. That fact is that we are *co-creators* with God. The old view which most of us picked up in our Sunday school experience is that, like Adam, we are a finished job; that our part hereafter is to choose between good and evil and that our degree of success in doing it will determine at the time of death whether we shall pass on into heaven or hell. It is the belief that we are created at birth and that what we are at that time, physically, mentally and morally, is what God intended us to be; that thus He *"made us"*.

Looking at life in that way people feel that they should not be held responsible for their moral delinquencies because God created them as they are. They feel that they are really doing their best to resist temptation and fail only because God did not create them with the same moral strength that is enjoyed by the more upright people. The truth of the matter is that when born we are precisely what we *have made ourselves* through many previous incarnations; and that in our next incarnation we shall be a physical, mental and moral improvement on what we now are in exactly the degree that we now give attention to such self creating work.

It is clear that holding a wrong view is exceedingly unfortunate because it leads to neglect of opportunity. Such a person, feeling that he has no responsibility in the matter, that God has made him as he is and he can only make the best of a bad job and let it go at that, will merely drift along on the tide of events, coming back in the next incarnation but little better in any way; whereas, had he known that he is his own creator and had earnestly endeavored to make the most of that knowledge, he could return in the next life born at a higher level mentally and morally and better equipped to live a happy and successful life. Fortunate indeed is he who hold sound views of life and then determines to work seriously at the task of self creation.

Every human being has a defective body and mind. We are all deficient in some respect, and that is precisely why we are still here in the material world where faults and frailties can most readily be overcome. The real, the true self of each one of us cannot be thus described. *That is* functioning simultaneously on several planes but least of all on the physical plane. On higher planes as the Monad we are not defective but perfect. It is as the Monad, the full, true Self, that man is "created in the image of God." Bringing ourselves from the physical personality up to the level of the Ego, and finally to the Monad, is our part of the creative work. It is a process of eliminating our faults and building the opposite virtue into the character. In each incarnation we accomplish some of that work but until the human being discovers the thrilling fact that he is really a god in the making and that he has within him the latent power that can be used to shape his life as he would like it to be, he merely drifts about on the evolutionary tide and his progress is so slow that it is scarcely preceptible. Incarnation after incarnation he comes back only very slightly improved in character. Thus he has unwittingly drifted for tens of thousands of years; and thus the average man will continue to drift for tens of thousands of years in the future, suffering all the aches and ills "that human flesh is heir to."

It is difficult to find an illustration that will serve for a fair comparison of the drifter to the person who knows something of the evolutionary plan and is using that knowledge to accelerate his progress. It is the difference that exists between walking briskly in the light and groping slowly in absolute darkness. That would be a great differnce even on fairly clear ground; but if there were many obstacles the difference would be enormously increased. Imagine a vast building covering several acres, with hundreds of rooms and halls of different size and with various levels so that there are many places where there are two or three steps to ascend or descend. If a man must pass through that great building in total darkness, although he knew precisely the direction of the exit he intended to reach, his progress would not only be distressingly slow but it is almost certain that he would lose his way and wander helplessly about and have many painful contacts with the furniture. If he was fortunate enough to have a flashlight, however feeble it might be, he could greatly quicken his pace and avoid most of the falls and bruises. If he could have full daylight flooding every room he could move confidently and swiftly. Theosophy is the light on the evolutionary road and fortunate indeed are they who have it.

(To Be Continued)

When Kipling wrote his famous lines
"If you can bear to hear the truth
you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap
for fools . . ."
did he have in mind what some religions have done to the words of Jesus?

The old idea of a scowling divinity, enthroned above the clouds, watching with telescopic eyes the misdeeds of his creatures, has almost passed, even among non-Theosophists. God as an understanding and helpful friend is the modern concept.

REAL PROBLEMS OF REINCARNATION

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former life?

11. Why do saintly people so often sustain such cruel hardships, when they must have been good and kindly for many lives past? If they have learned their lessons, why make them suffer?

12. How can one distinguish the karma carried over from past lives from the karma generated in the present incarnation?

13. When we consider our many failings and think of the hundreds of lives we have lived in which we must have had these same failings, seeing that we brought them over, does it not seem that reincarnation is not doing its job?

14. How can people be so stupid in some ways when they have lived so many times and should have overcome all forms of stupidity in view of their numerous and varied experiences?

15. Is a very clever person necessarily an old soul? If so, what about savages, known to be young souls, who sometimes have great skill in certain ways?

16. What is a weak personality to do who tries unceasingly to overcome some bad habit such as drunkenness or sensuality and is completely unable to do so? His karma is terrible in this life. Will it go on to the next? If so, is that just or fair?

17. It is said that the karma of suicide is a very unpleasant astral life and the same problem to deal with in the next incarnation, which then the personality contrives to solve. Does this mean that suicide can occur only once to the same Ego?

18. Theosophical teaching is that when a karmic lesson has been fully learned the karma ceases. What of a person incurably blind who becomes a spiritual giant, as occasionally a blind person contrives to do, yet his blindness cannot be cured?

19. With the millions of events happening hourly how can karma arrange that exactly the right thing happens at exactly the right moment to each individual?

20. If a person faithfully follows the teachings of the church in which he was brought up even though such teaching is partly erroneous, does he suffer the karma of error?

21 To what extent does prayer, meditation or concentration overcome karma and how can such methods set aside an automatic and Eternal Law?

We are not sold on the extreme tolerance of the Russian Government for all forms of belief even though it is officially atheistic. Then why must The Theosophical Society in Russia carry on in Switzerland?

IS VEGETARIANISM A "MUST" FOR THEOSOPHISTS?

From a Missouri Reader:

"As a subscriber and reader of your ANCIENT WISDOM, a reader of your writings in book form (I have just finished also your excellent article on Astrology in the "Science Meets Theosophy" series) and a fellow Theosophist, I am going to ask a favor of you, as follows:

I am preparing a compilation of famous mens' ideas on Vegetarianism, A Necessity of the New Era, and I should like to have yours—in a nutshell—so to speak. I should like this paragraph, or series of paragraphs, to be your most up-to-the-minute, potent thought on the subject."

The Editor's Reply:

"I am afraid my views on vegetarianism are not going to be such as you would wish to quote, though you have my entire permission to do so if you wish. They have been expressed more than once in ANCIENT WISDOM.

Briefly I think vegetarianism is a matter for the individual's own conscience—and constitution. There are conflicting opinions by equally eminent medical men and dieticians as to the desirability from the health standpoint of abstention from meat. The layman finds himself bewildered when one Doctor of high standing goes on record that meat poisons the human system while another of equal reputation is perfectly certain that life cannot be properly sustained without it. I am inclined to disbelieve the extreme statements on both sides. Heavy meat eaters have lived healthily to become octogenarians. So have vegetarians. There is no statement that can be made by either party that the other cannot produce an intelligent counter-statement in rebuttal. Personally I will say as I have stated publicly that in my opinion a vegetarian diet, if scientifically balanced, is probably better than a meat diet. If unbalanced (as unfortunately it often is) it can do great harm and the would-be vegetarian had better stick to meat.

From the standpoint of cruelty to animals a better case can be made. I have gone on record in ANCIENT WISDOM as unalterably opposed to the 'sports' of hunting, fishing, gigging and the like. But the case of non-killing of animals because of cruelty will not make much headway with the outside world so long as the vegetarian wears leather shoes, leather belts, and other apparel into the composition of which dead animals enter. True, he or she may exclude furs, but the animal had to die to have his hide stripped from him and the chance that he died of old age is remote. True also that there may be no acceptable substitute for leather shoes, but the meat-eater replies that for his particular physical needs his physician assures him there is no substitute for meat.

Finally, I agree with Dr. Arundale (*Adyar Theosophist,* June 1943) that vegetarianism, non-smoking even non-drinking, are too much stressed in the Theosophical Society, making members feel that those who abstain from them are somehow better than others, and those who do not are outside the pale. Hitler and Mussolini were total or virtual abstainers from all of these. Churchill indulges in all three. Abstention or non-abstention is a matter for the individual. It has nothing to do with goodness or achievement and he should not be judged either by his addiction or abstention.

I am sorry I cannot return a more satisfactory reply but such success as ANCIENT WISDOM has attained (and it has been in the field for a much longer period than any independent Theosophical magazine ever published) has been due to speaking the truth as we see it, and disregarding any and all views, no matter how widely accepted, which did not seem to us to be correct."

Answer from the Reader:

"Thank you, indeed, for letting me know your views on Vegetarianism. In my resume I am not going to quote any sterile, ascetic opinions, therefore, I appreciate, for use, your reasoned, live expression upon the subject. It has not, of course, changed my basic thought, but it has stimulated my thinking upon the rationality of application.

I should like to ask further—if you have the time to reply— do you not believe that man is certainly *going toward* vegetarianism? We are not ready, no, psychologically or spiritually, to accept it, but we are standing on the threshold, it does seem, discontented, restless, fearing to go forward, unwilling to turn back; believing in what lies ahead, yet continually compromising with old racial habits, which to carry over into the new era will again plunge us into calamity.

The great task of the Aquarian age, I understand, it to unite in the consciousness of man the life of the elemental, mineral, vegetable, animal, man and beyond man kingdoms, with man as the conscious Guardian of the lower members, and this being so, will not man become so compassionate as to render the culture and sacrifice of intelligent, kind, lovable "beings" for food, clothing, and what not, utterly unbearable? But, as you say, in your paragraph on cruelty to animals, in effect, there is little need to cry out for strict abstinence until the proper, less-sensitive substitutes have been found and put to use for man's material needs. (It does seem a bit encouraging to us impatient ones to see the school children out this fall gathering the common milkweed floss!)

While I respect the honest, serious expression of yourself and Dr. Arundale on the subject, and I think the earlier Theosophists did promote too vigorously and violently, perhaps, a kind of "ascetic" vegetarianism, I cannot but regret the dearth of education and preparation for the vegetarian Era-in-the-Becoming along the lines of a scientifically balanced regimen, such as would dispel all fear of embarkation upon the new.

I shall continue to read all I find in the pages of ANCIENT WISDOM, and wish there were more."

Final Reply from the Editor:

"I must compliment you on your letter. It is the most temperate statement of the case for vegetarianism that has ever been presented to me. One of the poorest arguments for vegetarianism has always seemed to me to be the fact that so many of its proponents cannot debate the matter without becoming furiously angry. I am reminded of the philosopher who said that the difference between a conviction and a prejudice is that the man who holds the conviction does not find it necessary to get mad about it.

Often I have writhed in spirit to hear a vegetarian member haranguing some new member or someone contemplating joining the T. S. about the evils of meat-eating. To term a non-vegetarian a "corpse-eater," knowing that the person one is addressing is in that category is not likely to secure the results aimed at. Furthermore the term is a misnomer as animals do not have corpses but carcasses. I know that many good members have been driven out of the Society by this misplaced zeal while others who would have joined have been scared off.

Yes, I do think that vegetarianism is an ideal to be held and a goal to be striven for. Educate the public by all means but do it without heat or rancor. Nobody was ever converted by abuse of his views. The non-vegetarian Doctors, of course, are just as abusive of the vegetarians, but that does not excuse either side. *Facts* are what the public wants. All that scorn and contempt poured out by one side on the other are just so much wasted energy.

One more point I might stress, and that is that if vegetarians expect to convert the public to the advantages of their views, a great many of them will have to do better with their vegetarian cooking. I have been served some of the most atrocious concoctions possible to imagine at the tables of vegetarian friends, who have assured me that the evil tasting mounds of sawdust covered with unsavory gravy were perfect meat substitutes and furnished all the necessary proteins to sustain man or beast. Attractive vegetarian cookery is certainly possible, and if it is not in bad taste to say so, my own wife serves most appetizing vegetarian meals to which, I think, no one could take exception. This also applies to a few

friends.

Thank you for your kind expressions. If in addition to spreading the gospel of vegetarianism among the unbelievers you can also induce the believers to adopt some of your own open-mindedness and tolerance, I think the vegetarian movement will gain more from your efforts than from those of a hundred of the over-zealous.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS THEOSOPHICALLY SOLVED

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or other or at least to correct some error of which we have been guilty. If we, like Job, cannot trace the error to this life we, unlike him, try to lay it to some unknown transgression committed in a former life. Very much oversimplification. It may be that—and it may be nothing of the kind.

Years ago a book purporting to teach very simply the language of France was titled "French Without Tears." It may be possible to learn a foreign language without suffering but so far as can be observed it is not possible so to learn the language of life. The animals suffer. There is horrible suffering in the bird and fish kingdom (a great deal of it due to human agency). The insects devour one another in a way that must entail sickening pain even though the nervous system of an insect may be far less responsive than that of a mammal. For what are they being punished? For what are they receiving bad karma? For acting according to their instincts and visiting pain upon others in satisfaction of their need to eat?

The "punishment" and "bad karma" theories break down when pushed into the lower kingdoms. They are full of inconsistencies even when applied to man, who may be presumed to be or to have been in past lives enough of a villain to justify any punishment later inflicted on him. Job, who (if he ever existed) lived 3500 years ago, knew more about it than any rewards-punishments theorist of today. Suffering is simply not amenable to any such artless explanation.

But pain does sometimes act as a signal of bodily ill-being so that remedial action may be taken. Why not always? Suffering does sometimes indicate wrong thought. Change the thought and the suffering ceases. Why not always? The unpleasant karma of physical discomfort may sometimes point to transgression in the current or a past life. Why not always?

The answer is that nature is very versatile. Her children may sometimes have one-track minds but nature's mind is many-tracked. She exploits not a single possibility of the situation but all of them. She uses her materials not for one purpose but for countless purposes. The reject of one creature may be the food of another, the nest of a third. Why should we not expect this to hold good in the realm of circumstance?

Suffering may be a bodily danger signal, a wrong thought indicator or merely an educational tool. In one sense it is always the last-named but the type of education may, and obviously does, vary with the circumstances and the individual. The oversimplification comes in trying to force it always into a preconceived mold. It may educate an animal into avoiding the trap which has previously cost it a crushed paw but does it educate the animal out of wrong thought into right thought? Unless by some far-fetched application (and we know Christian Scientists who are equal to it) the animal was guilty of wrong thought when he failed to steer clear of the trap. We do not think this application will appeal to the Theosophist, however. Does it punish the animal for eating another animal, and if so what of herbiverous animals? They suffer too. Granted there is little or no apprehension as with human suffering, there *is* suffering. Why?

There can be only one answer. Aside from the protective purpose of pain as demonstrated by the doctors—apart from the aim of changing wrong thought into right thought as quite properly advanced by the Christian Scientists—admitting the corrective intent of such karma as insisted upon by the Theosophist—there must be still another reason. It may not be a palatable reason to the first two schools but it will be acceptable to the occultist—is indeed his explanation.

SUFFERING IS A NECESSARY ACCOMPANIMENT OF EVOLUTION AND NO ONE EVER EVOLVED WITHOUT IT.

In some way which perhaps we cannot fully understand until personality and Ego consciousness are joined, the Ego, though he only suffers vicariously through his personality gains needed qualities by this means. As we cannot comprehend the processes by which our physical elemental contrives to separate from the food we eat exactly the components each bodily organ needs for its maintenance and health, so we cannot grasp the even more complicated technique used by the Ego to extract from our experiences the qualities which further his evolution.

We do know that evolved personalities become more spiritual, acquire greater understanding, sympathy, judgment and patience under prolonged suffering, and there is our cue. Such personalities, at least in some slight measure, are growing into the likness and reflection of their Egos. Their reaction—a right reaction—is beginning to mirror the reaction of their innermost souls. True, the lesser evolved become cantankerous, resentful, spiteful and morbid when ill health and pain from which there is no surcease lays them low. That, however, is to be expected. The personality is not yet even a faint reflection of the Ego which ensouls it. But that by no means implies that the Ego is not deriving benefit. Egos always derive benefit from personality experience whether for the latter the experience is pleasant or uncomfortable. And in the highly evolved stages, when initiation takes place, it is accompanied by suffering, physical, emotional or mental, so intense that it has been likened to a crucifixiou.

This was what happened to Job. Inwardly he knew it. Outwardly he only knew, by inspiration of his Ego, that he was not being punished but that some high purpose was subserved by his miseries.

For those who labor under the terrible burden of incurable illness, if it really *is* incurable and all remedies including spiritual healing have been tried in vain, there can be but one valid explanation. If the person, like Job, is conscious that he has not, in this life at least, been so derelict that the most drastic means are being applied to educate him to the nature of his offense; if he has by all means in his power tried to learn whatever lesson he feels karma may be attempting to teach him; if he has, too, exhausted all physical means for combating his illness and has failed also to find relief from his own efforts and those of the spiritual healers who have worked for him, then the solemn answer can only be that he stands on the threshold of Initiation and this is his Gethsemane. But let him not leap to such conclusion prematurely. There are few, even in the Theosophical Society, who are ready or nearly ready for this, their most important step forward since individualization from the animal kingdom. It is also probable that there are what might be termed minor initiations before the great test which insures the Ego safe passage for the rest of the evolutionary way. It may be one of these. But for a greatly advanced soul whose work and service has marked him out as in the van of spiritual evolution, it may indeed be the supreme test.

All other possible explanations should be canvassed and examined before this final transcendent reason is assigned. But if the trouble will not yield to any form of treatment and if the nature is so obviously spiritual that the personality itself radiates the Egoic divinity through all the suffering, then Initiation is here. And whether at long last, as with Job, health is again, seemingly by a miracle restored, or whether the sufferer passes on to a condition where suffering is no more possible, the Ego which is himself has gained something of incalculable value from the ordeal, which it can never lose.

This is an ultimate and rare explanation not applicable to most; but the choice few to whom it may apply, the

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WOULD YOU CARE TO REMEMBER ANCIENT WISDOM IN YOUR WILL?

★ ★ ★

Most people, Theosophists particularly, include bequests to altruistic causes in which they have been interested during life. Knowing that we shall be fully conscious after losing the physical body and perfectly aware of what is going on in the world we have temporarily left, it is pleasant to feel that we will not only be helping but will be able to see the effects of our help—something non-Theosophists have to take on faith.

We believe ANCIENT WISDOM may be worthy of your remembrance. Your interest in spreading the philosophy which has meant so much to you will not cease when you move to higher planes—will not ever cease if it is truly a part of you. And, in case we move there first and ANCIENT WISDOM is not carried on, we suggest an alternative bequest to some other activity for the enlightenment of the race.

We hope we are not out of order in these suggestions but it is a fact that they often do not cross the mind at the time a will is drawn because of the attention naturally given to its main provisions. Yet the testator would have welcomed the suggestion had it been made.

Millions are left to churches, missions, research foundations and universities. Without apology we suggest that the all-embracing wisdom of Theosophy which ANCIENT WISDOM exists to propagate is not less worthy of support than any of these.

AN OCCULT EXPERIENCE

The curious experience here narrated happened to the Editor's wife some 18 years ago. It may be stated that Mrs. Luntz is averse to sensationalism, quite matter-of-fact and not at all subject to visions or other out-of-the-ordinary experiences. She related the following to the Editor immediately after it occurred but it has never been given publicity except to a few theosophical friends. The account has been submitted to Mrs. Luntz and she has approved it for accuracy. It is repeated in her own words.

"I was standing in the bathroom at the wash bowl which was filling with water. All of a sudden I felt something tugging at my skirt and looking down I saw a little child with rosy cheeks, clear blue eyes and flaxen hair, dressed in Dutch costume. At the time I knew whether it was a boy or a girl but now I can't remember. I then realized that I myself had changed and was dressed as a Dutch woman including wooden shoes. I seemed to be in a different world but it all appeared very natural and I was not scared. I looked in the mirror before me and my whole build and appearance had changed into that of a Holland Dutch woman. I was shorter, stockier, with rosy complexion and Dutch costume. The whole thing lasted only a few minutes and then I changed back again.

I felt bewildered and immediately went into the next room and recounted the experience to my husband. He gave it as his opinion that it was a glimpse of a past incarnation brought on by a set of conditions which were exactly right for it to come through and that the running water probably played a part. I have no theory about it myself, but I feel that somehow it was a peep into the past."

INCARNATION'S PUNCTUATION

By Charles E. Luntz

When with first wail he greets Mamma
Baby's but a karmic comma,
He'll become, as bright years roll on,
An egoic semi-colon;
Meet his first infatuation,
Astral point of exclamation!
Find a hope to set his goal on,
Let us say, a mental colon:
Many actions rather rash,
Best expressed by just a dash —
Often tie his life in knots,
Sort of little karmic dots . . .
What if life is very dark,
A gigantic question mark?
There are times when things are brisk
Like a frothy asterisk.*
"Evil" in marks of quotation
Show it's merely a negation.
Circumstances come in packets,
So to say (enclosed in brackets).
Buddhic wisdom he may siphon,
Using Ego as a hyphen-.

Body cannot stand the gaff,
So begin new paragraph;
Till his karma lifts the bars
And he soars up to the stars.

* * * *

The Russians are not helping their case by such palpable falsehoods as that recently published in the magazine *Bolshevik*: that Edison stole the invention of the electric light bulb and Marconi his wireless discovery from Russians, to whom the credit really belongs. Anyone who would believe that would believe anything. In two editorials we stated our opinion that the people who govern Russia are not fools. We are beginning to wonder.

We say it with hesitation because we have always wanted to believe the best about our former allies the Russians, but the line of propaganda now emanating from Moscow against the United States and Britian resembles so closely the pre-war line of the Nazis it might almost have been written by Dr. Goebbels.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS THEOSOPHICALLY SOLVED

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firstfruits of the race, are, no matter what they are called upon to endure, among the happiest and most blessed of mankind.

THE ZODIAC IN "AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER"

6. Virgo

". . . avoid the incessant worry over little things in which many people spend their time."

—*III*:1