

THEOSOPHICAL STUDY AND PRACTICE

Articles by William Q. Judge

THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES

MUCH READING, LITTLE THOUGHT

OF STUDYING THEOSOPHY

THEOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF THE MICROCOSM

STUMBLING BLOCKS IN WORDS

“THE GATES OF GOLD”

ICONOCLASM TOWARD ILLUSIONS

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT OTHERS?

THEOSOPHY AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

SUICIDE IS NOT DEATH

“REWARD FOR UNMERITED SUFFERINGS”

DEVACHAN

MODERNIZED UPANISHAD

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE SERIES • No. 23
THEOSOPHY COMPANY (MYSORE) PRIVATE LTD.
BANGALORE 560 004

THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES

Study all scriptures written near and far;
Worship all images and saints of earth;
But if you do not study who and what you are,
All your vast studies are as nothing worth.

THERE are! a great many people who are always reading, I sheading, reading. They read each book that they can get hold of upon theosophical or occult subjects. Yet they do not seem to get on in their studies and so state with an air that seems to amount to an indictment of the thing they are studying.

Then there are others who are not known to read much, yet they seem to have a very complete grasp of the subject. I know two Theosophists, one of whom has read probably more than all the students in the Western Societies. He often refers to some new book just out, asking if we have read it. Yet he is hopelessly, at present, entangled in the vast net he has thrown around himself, composed almost wholly of the different ideas put forth by other minds, and has thus voluntarily placed himself under their domination. The other one has read but few books, just enough to know what theories are brought forward, yet he exhibits an extraordinary knowledge upon most Theosophical propositions and upon things not quite generally known.

What is the reason for this?

The reason is that truth is in fact very simple and quite on the surface, but most people prefer to bury it deep in a well, so that they may have the pleasure of digging for it.

There are a few general axiomatic propositions which should be applied in all directions, and with their aid most difficulties can be cleared away, and there is one great doctrine which overshadows

them all, binding them together. This latter is the doctrine of universal brotherhood. It should not be merely accepted as a great and high idea—so great in fact that it cannot be understood—but constant inquiry should be made by all earnest people to find out its actual, logical and scientific basis. For if it has no such basis, then it ought to be abandoned as a mere illusion, a mere juggle with words.

“Of making many books there is no end,” has been very well said of old. It is easy to *make* a book, but it is difficult to *write* one. To make one all that has to be done is to read enough of those formerly written and then cast it all into your own language. There are too many books thus made up and cast forth upon theosophical waters, to the confusion of the poor student. Why read all these? There are many of them full of the misconceptions of their authors, who although sincere, are themselves struggling to get into clear air.

But all this prevalence of authorship has produced in our people a habit of desiring more books, and a resulting disregard for what has been written of old time. Humanity has not changed much in many ages, and has always been pursuing its investigations, leaving behind it a record. But in the lapse of time the only books which endure are those which contain truth, and are thus *real books*: And we in this* age are ceaselessly and needlessly writing and reading as those of the past ages did, with the same inevitable result: that our *real books* will in the end be identical with those now left to us as a heritage from the past. So we ought to turn to those old books and with their aid *look within!* And in order to use them, all we have to do is by a little careful preliminary study come to comprehend the position of their authors, so that what at first appears strange in their writings will soon take on a different meaning, enabling us to see that, “that small, old path leading far away on which the sages walk,” has been all found and pointed out to us with infinite care and pains, by the sometimes despised sages of eastern lands.

But even all this good study if not combined with practice is “nothing worth.” It is time thrown away. And that practice does not consist in forming secret or exclusive bodies, either in or out of the Theosophical Society. Such so-called “exclusive” bodies are known to exist, but the

excluded ones need not have any regret Those exclusive of others are not practicing; they are not finding out anything of real profit; nor will their studies come to much more than dust and ashes in the mouth, for they are ignoring universal Brotherhood, and the first of the great law, that “*the first step in true magic is devotion to the interest of others*”

So we come to the last words of the first verse, that we must *study ourselves*. To do that we must help others and study them. The great self, which is the fountain and giver of all knowledge and power, is reflected in every man, and the wise student cannot afford to ignore the plain deduction that our first effort must be to remove from our minds the sense of being separate from any other person, his deeds or his thoughts. This is said to be a difficult task; but that difficulty arises on the one hand from selfishness and on the other from a natural averseness to accepting such a simple solution.

It is in fact not possible for us to gain from others. We cannot be told truths which do not already potentially exist in ourselves. We may hear them but they pass by and leave no trace. This is what Jesus meant when he said: “To him that hath shall be given”: and in the Hermetic philosophy it is plainly stated: “Do not think that I tell you what you know not; I only tell what you knew before.”

It is therefore better to take up two or three books such as *Isis Unveiled*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Light on the Path*, study them with care and allow their influence to cause the old knowledge within to revive, and the good seeds left over from past lives to germinate and grow into noble trees.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

The Occult Word
February-March, 1887

MUCH READING, LITTLE THOUGHT

THE wise man sagely said that of making books there is no end. If true in his day, it is the same now. Among members of the Theosophical Society the defects are widespread, of reading too many of the ever coming books and too little thought upon the matter read. Anyone who is in a position to see the letters of inquiry received by those in the Society who are prominent, knows that the greater number of the questions asked are due to want of thought, to the failure on the part of the questioners to lay down a sure foundation of general principles.

It is so easy for some to sit down and write a book containing nothing new save its difference of style from others, that the pilgrim theosophist may be quickly bewildered if he pays any attention. This bewilderment is chiefly due to the fact that no writer can express his thoughts in a way that will be exactly and wholly comprehended by every reader, and authors in theosophic literature are only, in fact, trying to present their own particular understanding of old doctrines which the readers would do much better with if they devoted more time to thinking them out for themselves.

In the field of every day books there is so much light reading that the superficial habit of skimming is plainly everywhere apparent, and it threatens to show itself in theosophical ranks.

So well am I convinced there are too many superfluous books in our particular field, that, if I had a youth to train in that department, I should confine him to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Secret Doctrine* for a very long time, until he was able to make books

for himself out of those, and to apply the principles found in them to every circumstance and to his own life and thought.

Those theosophists who only wish to indulge in a constant variety of new theosophical dishes will go on reading all that appears, but the others who are in earnest, who know that we are here to learn and not solely for our pleasure, are beginning to see that a few books well read, well analysed, and thoroughly digested are better than many books read over once. They have learned how all that part of a book which they clearly understand at first is already their own, and that the rest, which is not so clear or quite obscure, is the portion they are to study, so that it also, if found true, may become an integral part of their constant thought.

WILLIAM BREHON

Path, June, 1890

OF STUDYING THEOSOPHY

IT is often asked: How should I or my friend study theosophy?

In beginning this study a series of “don’ts” should first engage the student’s attention. Don’t imagine that you know everything, or that any man in scientific circles has uttered the last word on any subject; don’t suppose that the present day is the best, or that the ancients were superstitious, with no knowledge of natural laws. Don’t forget that arts, sciences, and metaphysics did not have their rise with European civilization; and don’t forget that the influence of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle of ancient Greece is still imposed upon the modern mind. Don’t think that our astronomers would have made anything but a mess of the zodiac if the old Chaldeans had not left us the one we use. Don’t forget that it is easy to prove that civilization of the highest order has periodically rolled around this globe and left traces great and small behind. Don’t confuse Buddhism with Brahmanism, or imagine that the Hindus are Buddhists; and don’t take the word of English or German Sanscrit scholars in explanation of the writings and scriptures of eastern nations whose thoughts are as foreign in their form to ours as our countries are. One should first be prepared to examine with a clear and unbiassed mind.

But suppose the enquirer is disposed at the outset to take the word of theosophical writers, then caution is just as necessary, for theosophical literature does not bear the stamp of authority. We should all be able to give a reason for the hope that is within us, and we cannot do that if we have swallowed without study the words of others.

But what is study? It is not the mere reading of books, but rather long, earnest, careful thought upon that which we have taken up. If a student accepts reincarnation and karma as true doctrines, the work is but begun. Many theosophists accept doctrines of that name, but are not able to say what it is they have accepted. They do not pause to find out what reincarnates, or how, when, or why karma has its effects, and often do not know what the word means. Some at first think that when they die they will reincarnate, without reflecting that it is the lower personal I they mean, which cannot be born again in a body. Others think that karma is—well, karma, with no clear idea of classes of karma, or whether or not it is punishment or reward or both. Hence a careful learning from one or two books of the statement of the doctrines, and then a more careful study of them, are absolutely necessary.

There is too little of such right study among theosophists, and too much reading of new books. No student can tell whether Mr. Sinnett in *Esoteric Buddhism* writes reasonably unless his book is learned and not merely skimmed. Although his style is clear, the matter treated is difficult, needing firm lodgment in the mind, followed by careful thought. A proper use of his book, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, and all other matter written upon the constitution of man, leads to an acquaintance with the doctrines as to the being most concerned, and only when that acquaintance is obtained is one fitted to understand the rest.

Another branch of study is that pursued by natural devotees, those who desire to enter into the work itself for the good of humanity. Those should study all branches of theosophical literature all the harder, in order to be able to clearly explain it to others, for a weak reasoner or an apparently credulous believer has not much weight with others.

Western theosophists need patience, determination, discrimination, and memory, if they ever intend to seize and hold the attention of the world for the doctrines they disseminate.

WILLIAM BREHON

THEOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF THE MICROCOSM

THE greatest schisms often come about through the supporters of one cause disputing over mere terminology. Mr. Subba Row, in his able addresses on *Bhagavad Gita*, condemned “the sevenfold classification” which has come to be very largely accepted among Theosophists all over the world, and declared, that as that particular classification seemed to him unscientific and misleading, he preferred to adopt another. This brought out a reply which was published in *The Path*, and one which H. P. Blavatsky wrote for the *Theosophist*. As editor of the first named magazine I saw no occasion to enter into any part of the small contest, although at the time the first reply was not really on its face an argument newly propounded for the theory, but rather one pointing out possible inconsistencies in Mr. Subba Row’s position. In the May *Theosophist* Mr. Subba Row goes at more length into the matter, and it seems that if his two articles are taken together a way out of the difficulty may be found.

As his articles appeal to my eyes and mind, the real difficulty seems to be, not with *any* and *all sevenfold* classifications, but with the *particular sevenfold classification* found in *Esoteric Buddhism* and other theosophical works. He has in many places given his adherence to the number *seven* as a perfect number, but that does not necessarily bind him to the sevenfold division of *Esoteric Buddhism*. And although I have been an adherent of the Theosophical Society longer than our brother Subba Row, as well as an admirer and supporter of H. P. Blavatsky for many years and am still, yet I cannot adopt the manner in which the terms in the equation of man have been allotted by the author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, I have all

along thought that that allotment was more or less tentative, but still have always believed that man—taken as a whole—could be called a sevenfold composition. While the changes of position given to the various “principles” have been going on, I have preferred to stick to the threefold division of *Body, Soul* and *Spirit*, leaving it open to me to say whether or not I would adopt a fourth—that is, the whole three together.

On page 506, May *Theosophist*, I find Mr. Subba Row saying:—”I am yet to be convinced that the sevenfold classification we have adopted was the *real sevenfold classification of this ancient school of occultism*. (The italics are mine.) From this we must conclude that he believes the ancient school did have a sevenfold classification, but that ours is not the same. In this—if it be his position—I agree with him. But we should never quarrel over mere words or numbers. If one should say “I believe in duality, and not in the septenary,” he would be right so long as he admits that one of two making up the duad was not perfectly known to him in all its parts; for in the duality could be found every one of the seven or the nine, or the twenty-five principles into which some other philosopher chose to divide the human subject. So for the present, I say I believe in the *ternary* division, that being oiie more easily comprehended by the minds of this Kali-Yuga.

This brings us to the question:—”Is it possible for the mind of this Yuga or perhaps of this part of it—to thoroughly comprehend a psychological enumeration which includes seven numbers?” We can grasp seven easily enough in lower things, such as mathematics, the days of the week, and so on, but I doubt if the undeveloped man can, with his unregenerated mind, grasp *seven* when applied to the unknown quantities of the higher nature. The more especially is this difficult when one considers the poverty of the English language in psychological things.

It is a language that has come up out of piracy, brigandage and war. Very true that it has taken over words from almost all languages, but for what purposes? To suit the uses of nations bound on the path of self aggrandisement, of mere money getting, of individualism. How could European minds understand the statement that there may be an

astral body and an astral sha^e also, each distinct from the other, when they have always known that *body* is a thing due to accretions from beef and beer? And if one were to tell them that upon approaching the; hall of Brahman a point is reached where the flavour of Brahman is perceived, while at another point the glory of Brahman becomes apparent, they would understand the flavour as something due to seasoning or sauce, and the glory to be a mere effulgence or wide extended fame. But it was necessary to direct their minds to the fact that there is more of man than mere body, and therefore such books as *Esoteric Buddhism*, *Zanoni* and others came before them. And in Mr. Sinnett's book some division had to be adopted that Western minds could grasp until they were able to go higher. But for my part I have never understood that his book was gospel truth. The great basis of our Society would be undermined by any such doctrine, just as much as his own progress would be retarded did he fancy that the views expressed by him were his own invention. In his work he has been careful to show that his teachers hold that a comprehension of numbers is coincident with a development of certain inner senses or principles in man; and as he says that our "fifth principle" is only in germ, it must follow under the law of correspondences,—that it is impossible for the present man to grasp an equation, relating to these higher states, which includes more than five terms. The result then is that when we deal with these matters we will have to use the unknown quantity.*, and leave every one who deals intellectually with the problem to his own manner of placing the different terms. Those who investigate the subject, however, by means of the inner guide, will discover upon attempting to convey their experiences to their intellect-using fellows, that it is not possible to put their hearers into complete possession of the information gained in that way. But even if both of these classes in the West are left to their own devices, many decades will pass away, and many false as well as ridiculous systems will arise, grow up and disappear, before the whole truth will be known. But if that object of our Society which calls for a demonstration of the value of the ancient Aryan philosophy and psychology is sedulously pursued, we may hope for an earlier dawn of a better day. Who then

are to be foremost in this? Our brothers who now possess Hindu bodies! They are within reach of the material, they are now in bodies that have grown on Indian soil, they are charged with a debt to the great sages of the past. Let them faithfully translate those books into English, explaining the terms as nearly as possible in every case, and not go on with mere transliterations of words that do not exist for the West. Thus the power and energy of the West will be wedded to the metaphysics and spiritual inheritance of the East, while both will be saved from a greater darkness. If this is not done, the day will come when the Hindu of today will find that he has failed to help his Western brothers who were in reality once themselves Hindus. Mr. Subba Row can very easily—owing to his mastery of English—enlighten us all by giving us better translations, or, if his time will not allow that, by inducing many Brahmans in India by whom he is held in high esteem, to act upon suggestion of his in that direction.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Theosophist, August, 1887

STUMBLING BLOCKS IN WORDS

A FELLOW student came to me the other day and asked, “What is the relation of ‘space’ to ‘sat’? Is there any difference? In the *Secret Doctrine* I find that H.P.B., quoting from the disciples’ catechism, says that ‘space is that which is and ever was and is not created.’ “

There is as much stumbling on mere words by students of Theosophy as on anything else. A simple word will often keep out the truth, and not only cause us to reach wrong conclusions, but frequently to enter upon disputes which sometimes end in quarrels. But in the question asked about “space” and “sat” there is an error in postulating “relation” for things which are without relation. “Sat” means being or *beness*, so it must be indivisible and unrelateable; “space” must be the same as “sat” because it is everywhere, being the one thing or aspect of things from which there is no escape. The moment we speak of “sat” or *beness*, we are forced to say that it exists somewhere, using the word “somewhere” in the abstract sense, and that “somewhere” is space. They cannot be dissociated from each other. So when I met the extract from the disciples’ catechism in the *Secret Doctrine*, I at once came to the conclusion that “sat” is the word to metaphysically express the same idea as we have in mind when we think of space, the one being abstract existence and the other abstract locality in which to place the existence.

At one time some Theosophists were discussing the true sort of life and practice for a Theosophist. And one said that he thought that the body ought to be “cultivated.” The rest at

once entered into a discussion which lasted some time, during which the various arguments and illustrations of each were brought

forward, when at the end it was suddenly discovered that there was not, in fact, any disagreement. The whole misunderstanding grew out of the one word “cultivation,” which should have been “purification.”

We should all be careful not only to use the right word to express the idea intended to be conveyed, but also to accurately understand what is the idea the other person is trying to express, and to do this regardless of what words may have been used. In doing so it is absolutely necessary to remember what aspect the terms are being used in. Take “Jiva” for instance. It means life, and may be made to mean soul or ego. Mr. Sinnett has adopted Jiva to designate the mere life-principle of the human organism. But all through the metaphysical writings of the Hindoos we can find the word used to describe the immortal self. And there is no more confusion in these writings than there is in those of English speaking nations. Napoleon used to say that he paid attention to find out what idea might be behind anything that was said to him, and did not listen so much to the words as to the ideas which they were used to shadow forth. Words do no more than shadow forth the ideas, and a great deal depends upon the mental touch, taste, and power of smell of the person to whom the words are addressed. Remembering that there are such stumbling blocks as these in the way, the wise Theosophist will not be made to fall.

CADI

Path, August, 1890

“THE GATES OF GOLD”

When the strong man has crossed the threshold he speaks no more to those at the other (this) side. And even the words he utters when he is outside are so full of mystery, so veiled and profound, that only those who follow in his steps can see the light within them.—*Through the Gates of Gold*, p. 19.

HE fails to speak *when* he has crossed, because, if he did, they would neither hear nor understand him. All the language he can use when on this side is language based upon experience gained outside the Gates, and when he uses that language, it calls up in the minds of his hearers only the ideas corresponding to the plane they are on and experience they have undergone; for if he speaks of that kind of idea and experience which he has found on the other side, his hearers do not know what is beneath his words, and therefore his utterances seem profound. They are not veiled and profound because he wishes to be a mystic whose words no one can expound, but solely because of the necessities of the case. He is willing and anxious to tell all who wish to know, but cannot convey what he desires, and he is sometimes accused of being unnecessarily vague and misleading.

But there *are* some who pretend to have passed through these Gates and who utter mere nothings, mere juggles of words that cannot be understood because there is nothing behind them rooted in experience. Then the question arises, “How are we to distinguish between these two?”

There are two ways.

1. By having an immense erudition, a profound knowledge of the various and numberless utterances of those known Masters throughout

the ages whose words are full of power. But this is obviously an immense and difficult task, one which involves years devoted to reading and a rarely-found retentiveness of memory. So it cannot be the one most useful to us. It is the path of mere book-knowledge.

2. The other mode is by testing those utterances by our intuition. There is scarcely any one who has not got an internal voice—a silent monitor—who, so to say, strikes within us the bell that corresponds to truth, just as a piano’s wires each report the vibrations peculiar to it, but not due to striking the wire itself. It is just as if we had within us a series of wires whose vibrations are all true, but which will not be vibrated except by those words and propositions which are in themselves true. So that false and pretending individual who speaks in veiled language only mere nothingness will never vibrate within us those wires which correspond to truth. But when one who has been to and through those Gates speaks ordinary words really veiling grand ideas, then all the invisible wires within immediately vibrate in unison. The inner monitor has struck them, and we feel that he has said what is true, and whether we understand him or not we feel the power of the vibration and the value of the words we have heard.

Many persons are inclined to doubt the existence in themselves of this intuition, who in fact possess it. It is a common heritage of man, and only needs unselfish effort to develop it. Many selfish men have it in their selfish lives; many a great financier and manager has it and exercises it. This is merely its lowest use and expression.

By constantly referring mentally all propositions to it and thus giving it an opportunity for growth, it will grow and speak soon with no uncertain tones. This is what is meant in old Hindu books by the expression, “a knowledge of the real meaning of sacred books.” It ought to be cultivated because it is one of the first steps in knowing ourselves and understanding others.

In this civilization especially we are inclined to look outside instead of inside ourselves* Nearly all our progress is material and thus superficial. Spirit is neglected or forgotten, while that which is not spirit is enshrined as such. The intuitions of the little/jchild are stifled until at last they are almost lost, leaving the many at the mercy of

judgments based upon exterior reason. How, then, can one who has been near the Golden Gates—much more he who passed through them— be other than silent in surroundings where the golden refulgence is unknown or denied. Obligated to use the words of his fellow travellers, he gives them a meaning unknown to them, or detaches them from their accustomed relation. Hence, he is sometimes vague, often misleading, seldom properly understood. But not lost are any of these words, for they, sound through the ages, and in future eras they will turn themselves into sentences of gold in the hearts of disciples yet to come,

MOULVIE

Path, May, 1888

ICONOCLASM TOWARD ILLUSIONS

A DISPOSITION not to interfere in any way with beliefs which are illusions prevails with many who dislike the pain caused by such tearing away of the veil. And the argument that illusionary beliefs, creeds, and dogmas should not be done away with so long as the believer is happy or good has been used by the Christian Church—and more especially by the Roman Catholic branch of it—as a potent means of keeping the mind of man in an iron chain. They are accustomed to add that unless such creeds and beliefs shall stand, morality will die out altogether. But experience does not prove the position to be correct.

For numerous examples exist in the dissenting or Protestant form of Christianity showing that the important doctrines of the Church are not necessary for the prevailing of good morals; and, on the other hand, immorality, vice, and crime in places high and low coexist with a formal declaration of belief in the church dogmas. In many parts of Italy the grossest superstition and murderous vengefulness and crooked hearts are found side by side with an outwardly pious compliance with the ordinances of the Church and a superstitious belief in its dogmas. The whole Christian assembly of nations officially violates the commands of Jesus every day and hour.

Shall it be worse or better, or kind or harsh, to tear away the veil as quickly as possible? And if the iconoclastic attack should be made, for what reason ought one to hesitate because the operation and the attack may result in mental pain?

The only reason for hesitation lies in this fear to give pain; there can be nothing but good result from the change from an untrue and

illogical, and therefore debasing, creed, if a system that is complete and reasonable be furnished in its place.

Were we dealing with children or with a race mind which though dwelling in an adult body is but that of a child, then, indeed, it would be right to lead them on by what may be entirely an illusion. But the day of man's childhood as an immortal being has passed away. He is now grown up, his mind has arrived at the point where it must know, and when, if knowledge be refused, this violation of our being will result in the grossest and vilest superstition or the most appalling materialism. No child is born without the accompanying pains, and now the soul-mind of man is struggling for birth. Shall we aid in preventing it merely for the avoidance of preliminary pain? Shall we help a vast brood of priests to refasten the clamps of steel which for so many centuries they have held tightly on the race-mind? Never, if we see the great truth that we are preparing for a cycle when reason is to take her place beside the soul and guide the pilgrim to the tree of life eternal.

Be not beguiled by the argument that 'tis unwise to tell the truth. It is but the song of the siren, intended to lure the traveler to his doom.

Tell the truth, but do not force it. If even a pious soul should lose the historical Jesus Christ and see instead the glorious image of the Self in every man, that were a gain worth all the pain the first rude shock might give. The danger of lifting the veil of Isis lies not in the doctrines of Unity, Reincarnation, and Karma, but in untaught mysteries which no Theosophist is able to reveal. The change from dogma or creed to a belief in law and justice impartial will bring perhaps some tears to the soul, but the end thereof is peace and freedom.

That "great orphan Humanity," now grown up, no longer needs the toys of a thousand years ago, but requires, and with a voice like the rush of mighty waters demands, that every veil shall be lifted, every lie unveiled, and every light be lighted that can shed a ray upon the remainder of its toilsome road,

A. T. MANA

Path, December, 1892

HOW SHOULD WE TREAT OTHERS?

THE subject relates to our conduct toward and treatment of our fellows, including in that term all people with whom we have any dealings. No particular mode of treatment is given by Theosophy. It simply lays down the law that governs us in all our acts, and declares the consequences of those acts. It is for us to follow the line of action which shall result first in harmony now and forever, and second, in the reduction of the general sum of hate and opposition in thought or act which now darkens the world.

The great law which Theosophy first speaks of is the law of karma, and this is the one which must be held in view in considering the question. Karma is called by some the "law of ethical causation," but it is also the law of action and reaction; and in all departments of nature the reaction is equal to the action, and sometimes the reaction from the unseen but permanent world seems to be much greater than the physical act or word would appear to warrant on the physical plane. This is because the hidden force on the unseen plane was just as strong and powerful as the reaction is seen by us to be. The ordinary view takes in but half of the facts in any such case and judges wholly by superficial observation.

If we look at the subject only from the point of view of the person who knows not of Theosophy and of the nature of man, nor of the forces Theosophy knows to be operating all the time, then the reply to the question will be just the same as the everyday man makes. That is, that he has certain rights he must and will arid ought to protect; that he has property he will and may keep and use any way he pleases; and if a man injure him he ought to and will resent it; that if he is

insulted by word or deed he will at once fly not only to administer punishment on the offender, but also try to reform, to admonish, and very often to give that offender up to the arm of the law; that if he knows of a criminal he will denounce him to the police and see that he has meted out to him the punishment provided by the law of man. Thus in everything he will proceed as is the custom and as is thought to be the right way by those who live under the Mosaic retaliatory law.

But if we are to inquire into the subject as Theosophists, and as Theosophists who know certain laws and who insist on the absolute sway of karma, and as people who know what the real constitution of man is, then the whole matter takes on, or ought to take on, a wholly different aspect.

The untheosophical view is based on separation, the Theo-sophical upon unity absolute and actual. Of course if Theosophists talk of unity but as a dream or a mere metaphysical thing, then they will cease to be Theosophists, and be mere professors, as the Christian world is today, of a code not followed. If we are separate one from the other the world is right and resistance is a duty, and the failure to condemn those who offend is a distinct breach of propriety, of law, and of duty. But if we are all united as a physical and psychical fact, then the act of condemning, the fact of resistance, the insistance upon rights on all occasions—all of which means the entire lack of charity and mercy—will bring consequences as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow.

What are those consequences, and why are they?

They are simply this, that the real man, the entity, the thinker, will react back on you just exactly in proportion to the way you act to him, and this reaction will be in another life, if not now, and even if now felt will still return in the next life.

The fact that the person whom you condemn, or oppose, or judge seems now in this life to deserve it for his acts in this life, does not alter the other fact that his nature will react against you when the time comes. The reaction is a law not subject to nor altered by any

sentiment on your part. He may have, truly, offended you and even hurt you, and done that which in the eye of man is blameworthy, but all this does not have anything to do with the dynamic fact that if you arouse his enmity by your condemnation or judgment there will be a reaction on you, and consequently on the whole of society in any century when the reaction takes place. This is the law and the fact as given by the Adepts, as told by all sages, as reported by those who have seen the inner side of nature, as taught by our philosophy and easily provable by anyone who will take the trouble to examine carefully. Logic and small facts of one day or one life, or arguments on lines laid down by men of the world who do not know the real power and place of thought nor the real nature of man cannot sweep this away. After all argument and all logic it will remain. The logic used against it is always lacking in certain premises based on facts, and while seeming to be good logic, because the missing facts are unknown to the logician, it is false logic. Hence an appeal to logic that ignores facts which we know are certain is of no use in this inquiry. And the ordinary argument always uses a number of assumptions which are destroyed by the actual inner facts about thought, about karma, about the reaction by the inner man.

The Master “K.H.,” once writing to Mr. Sinnett in the *Occult World*, and speaking for his whole order and not for himself only, distinctly wrote that the man who goes to denounce a criminal or an offender works not with nature and harmony but against both, and that such act tends to destruction instead of construction. Whether the act be large or small, whether it be the denunciation of a criminal, or only your own insistence on rules or laws or rights, does not alter the matter or take it out of the rule laid down by that Adept. For the only difference between the acts mentioned is a difference of degree alone; the act is the same in kind as the violent denunciation of a criminal. Either this Adept was right or wrong. If wrong, why do we follow the philosophy laid down by him and his messenger, and concurred in by all the sages and teachers of the past? If right, why this swimming in an adverse current, as he said himself, why this attempt to show that we can set aside karma and act as we please

without consequences following us to the end of time? I know not. I prefer to follow the Adept, and especially so when I see that what he says is in line with facts ill nature and is a certain conclusion from the system of philosophy I have found in Theosophy.

I have never found an insistence on my so-called rights at all necessary. They preserve themselves, and it must be true if the law of karma is the truth that no man offends against me unless I in the past have offended against him.

In respect to man, karma has no existence without two or more persons being considered. You act, another person is affected, karma follows. It follows on the thought of each and not on the act, for the other person is moved to thought by your act; Here are two sorts of karma, yours and his, and both are intermixed There is the karma or effect on you of your own thought and act, the result on you of the other person's thought; and there is the karma on or with the other person consisting of the direct result of your act and his thoughts engendered by your act and thought. This is all permanent. As affecting you there may be various effects. If you have condemned, for instance, we may mention some: (a) the increased tendency in yourself to indulge in condemnation, which will remain and increase from life to life; (b) this will at last in you change into violence and all that anger and condemnation may naturally lead to; (c) an opposition to you is set up in the other person, which will remain forever until one day both suffer for it, and this may be in a tendency in the other person in any subsequent life to do you harm and hurt you in the million ways possible in life, and often also unconsciously. Thus it may all widen out and affect the whole body of society. Hence no matter how justifiable it may seem to you to condemn or denounce or punish another, you set up cause for sorrow in the whole race that must work out some day. And you must feel it.

The opposite conduct, that is, entire charity, constant forgiveness, wipes out the opposition from others, expends the old enmity and at the same time makes no new similar causes. Any other sort of thought or conduct is sure to increase the sum of hate in the world, to make

cause for sorrow, to continually keep up the crime and misery in the world. Each man can for himself decide which of the two ways is the right one to adopt.

Self-love and what people call self-respect may shrink from following the Adept's view I give above, but the Theosophist who wishes to follow the law and reduce the general sum of hate will know how to act and to think, for he will follow the words of the Master of H.P.B. who said: "Do not be ever thinking of yourself and forgetting that there are others; for you have no karma of your own, but the karma of each one is the karma of all." And these words were sent by H.P.B. to the American Section and called by her words of wisdom, as they seem also to me to be, for they accord with law. They hurt the *personality* of the nineteenth century, but the personality is for a day, and soon it will be changed if Theosophists try to follow the law of charity as enforced by the inexorable law of karma. We should all constantly remember that if we believe in the Masters we should at least try to imitate them in the charity they show for our weakness and faults. In no other way can we hope to reach their high estate, for by beginning thus we set up a tendency which will one day perhaps bring us near to their development; by not beginning we put off the day forever.

F.T.S.

Path, February, 1896

THEOSOPHY AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

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

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

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

has been so altered that death at the hands of the law is imposed for murder only,—omitting some unimportant exceptions.

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

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

What happens? All the onlooker sees is that the sudden cutting off is accomplished; but what of the reality? A natural death is like the falling of a leaf near the winter time. The time is fully ripe, all the powers of the leaf having separated; those acting no longer, its stem has but a slight hold on the branch and the slightest wind takes it away. So with us; we begin to separate our different inner powers and parts one from the other because their full term has ended, and when the final tremor comes the various inner component parts of the man fall away from each other and let the soul go free. But the

poor criminal has not come to the natural end of his life. His astral body is not ready to separate from his physical body, nor is the vital, nervous energy ready to leave. The entire inner man is closely knit together, and he is the reality. I have said these parts are not ready to separate—they are in fact not able to separate because they are bound together by law and a force over which only great Nature has control.

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

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

And even with those not called “sensitive” these floating criminals have an effect, arousing evil thoughts where any basis for such exist in those individuals. We cannot argue away the immense force of

hate, revenge, fear, vanity, all combined. Take the case of Giteau, who shot President Garfield. He went through many days of trial. His hate, anger and vanity were aroused to the highest pitch every day and until the last, and he died full of curses for every one who had anything to do with his troubles. Can we be so foolish as to say that all the force he thus generated was at once dissipated? Of course it was not. In time it will be transformed into other forces, but during the long time before that takes place the living Giteau will float through our mind and senses carrying with him and dragging over us the awful pictures drawn and frightful passions engendered.

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

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

Path, September, 1895

SUICIDE IS NOT DEATH

AS a student of Theosophy and human nature I have been interested in the discussion of the subject of self-murder to which *The World* has given a place in its columns. The eloquent agnostic, Col. Ingersoll, planted his views in the ground with the roots of them in the grave, giving the poor *felo de se* nothing beyond the cold earth to cheer him in his act, save perhaps the cowardly chance of escape, from responsibility or pain. Those who, as Nym Crinkle says, occupy themselves with replying to Col. Ingersoll fall back on the mere assertion that it is a sin to kill the body in which the Lord saw fit to confine a man. Neither of these views is either satisfactory or scientific.

If suicide is to be approved it can only be on the ground that the man is only a body, which, being a clod, may well be put out of its sufferings. From this it would be an easy step to justify the killing of other bodies that may be in the way, or old, or insane, or decrepit, or vicious. For if the mass of clay called body is all that we are, if man is not a spirit unborn and changeless in essence, then what wrong can there be in destroying it when you own it, or are it, and how easy to find good and sufficient reason for disposing similarly of others? The priest condemns suicide, but one may be a Christian and yet hold the opinion that a quick release from earth brings possible heaven several years nearer. The Christian is not deterred from suicide by any good reasons advanced in his religion, but rather from cowardice. Death, whenever natural or forced has become a terror, is named "The King of Terrors." This is because, although a vague heaven is offered on the other side, life and death are so little understood that men had

rather bear the ills they know than fly to others which are feared through ignorance of what those are.

Suicide, like any other murder is a sin because it is a sudden disturbance of the harmony of the world. It is a sin because it defeats nature. Nature exists for the sake of the soul and for no other reason, it has the design, so to say, of giving the soul experience and self-consciousness. These can only be had by means of a body through which the soul comes in contact with nature, and to violently sever the connection before the natural time defeats the aim of nature, for the present compelling her, by her own slow processes, to restore the task left unfinished. And as those processes must go on through the soul that permitted the murder, more pain and suffering must follow.

And the disturbance of the general harmony is a greater sin than most men think. They consider themselves alone, as separate, as not connected with others. But they are connected throughout the whole world with all other souls and minds. A subtle, actual, powerful band links them all together, and the instant one of all these millions disturbs the link the whole mass feels it by reaction through soul and mind, and can only return to a normal state through a painful adjustment. This adjustment is on the unseen, but all-important, planes of being in which the real man exists. Thus each murderer of self or of another imposes on entire humanity an unjustifiable burden. From this injustice he cannot escape, for his body's death does not cut him off from the rest; it only places him, deprived of nature's instruments, in the clutch of laws that are powerful and implacable, ceaseless in their operation and compulsory in their demands.

Suicide is a huge folly, because it places the committer of it in an infinitely worse position than he was in under the conditions from which he foolishly hoped to escape. It is not death. It is only a leaving of one well-known house in familiar surroundings to go into a new place where terror and despair alone have place. It is but a preliminary death done to the clay, which is put in the "cold embrace of the grave," leaving the man himself naked and alive, but out of mortal life and not in either heaven or hell.

The Theosophist sees that man is a complex being full of forces and faculties, which he uses in a body on earth. The body is only a part of his clothing; he himself lives also in other places. In sleep he lives in one, awakes in another, in thought in another. He is a threefold being of body, soul and spirit. And this trinity can be divided again into its necessary seven constituents. And just as he is threefold, so also is nature -material* psychical or astral, and spiritual. The material part of nature governs the body, the psychical affects the will and the; spirit lives in the spiritual, all being bound together. Were we but bodies we might well commit them to material nature and the grave, but if we rush out of the material we must project ourselves into the psychical or astral. And as all nature proceeds with regularity under the government of law, we know that each combination has its own term of life before a natural and easy separation of the component parts can take place. A tree or a mineral or a man is a combination of elements or parts, and each must have its projected life term. If we violently and prematurely cut them off one from the other, certain consequences must ensue. Each constituent requires its own time for dissolution. And suicide being a violent destruction of the first element—body—the other two, of soul and spirit, are left without their natural instrument. The man then is but half dead, and is compelled by the law of his own being to wait until the natural term is reached.

The fate of the suicide is horrible in general. He has cut himself off from his body by using mechanical means that affect the body, but cannot touch the real man. He then is projected into the astral world, for he has to live somewhere. There is the remorseless law, which acts really for his good, compels him to wait until he can properly die. Naturally he must wait, half dead, the months or years which, in the order of nature, would have rolled over him before body and soul and spirit could rightly separate. He becomes a shade; he lives in purgatory, so to say, called by the Theosophist the “place of desire and passion,” or “Kama Loka.” He exists in the astral realm entirely, eaten up by his own thoughts. Continually repeating in vivid thoughts the act by which he tried to stop his life’s pilgrimage, he at the same time sees the people and the place he left, but is not able to

communicate with any one except, now and then, with some poor sensitive, who often is frightened by the visit. And often he fills the minds of living persons who may be sensitive to his thoughts with the picture of his own taking off, occasionally leading them to commit upon themselves the act of which he was guilty.

To put it theosophically, the suicide has cut himself off on one side from the body and life which were necessary for his experience and evolution, and on the other from his spirit, his guide and “Father in heaven.” He is composed now of astral body, which is of great tensile strength, informed and inflamed by his passions and desires. But a portion of his mind, called manas, is with him. He can think and perceive, but, ignorant of how to use the forces of that realm, he is swept hither and thither, unable to guide himself. His whole nature is in distress, and with it to a certain degree the whole of humanity, for through the spirit all are united. Thus he goes on, until the law of nature acting on his astral body, that begins to die, and then he falls into a sleep from which he awakens in time for a season of rest before beginning once more a life on earth. In his next reincarnation he may, if he sees fit, retrieve or compensate or suffer over again.

There is no escape from responsibility. The “sweet embrace of the wet clay” is a delusion. It is better to bravely accept the inevitable, since it must be due to our errors in other older lives, and fill every duty, try to improve all opportunity. To teach suicide is a sin, for it leads some to commit it. To prohibit it without reason is useless, for our minds must have reasons for doing or not doing. And if we literally construe the words of the Bible, then there we find it says no murderer has a place but in hell. Such constructions satisfy but few in an age of critical investigation and hard analysis. But give men the key to their own natures, show them how law governs both here and beyond the grave, and their good sense will do the rest. An illogical repentance of the grave is as foolish as an illogical heaven for nothing.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

“REWARD FOR UNMERITED SUFFERINGS”

KARMA AS JUDGE, GUIDE AND REWARDER

IN the *Key to Theosophy*, on page 161, the author uses a phrase which has been objected to on the ground that a strict construction of it overthrows the whole doctrine of Karma. The words referred to and the contiguous sentences are:

Our philosophy teaches that Karmic punishment reaches the Ego only in its next incarnation. After death it *receives only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its past incarnation.*

The italicised portion is the part objected to, and the objection raised is that, if all that happens to us so happens because it is our Karma, then it cannot be *unmerited*: hence, either the statement is incorrect or Karma is not the law of justice, but there must be some other one governing man and the vicissitudes of his life.

Let us go further down the same page and see if some sentences in the same paragraph do not bear upon the meaning of the author. She says:

If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consequence of some sin in a preceding existence; on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, and therefore *thinks* he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death comes to our spiritual selves ever as a deliverer and friend.

All students of theosophy known to me believe that Karma is the great governing law, that all suffering and reward come from and through Karma; and, as I understand from the published and unpublished views of H. P. Blavatsky, she holds the same opinion.

Therefore, such being the case, what we have to enquire into is the meaning intended to be conveyed by the passages cited. There is no doubt whatever that the author of the *Key* agrees, except perhaps about hell, with the Buddhist priest who, writing several years ago in the *Theosophist*¹ upon this subject, said:

In this light Karma may be defined as . . . that irresistible force which drags the criminal into the hell fire amidst his loud lamentations, the powerful hand that rescues the wretch from the merciless hands of the infernal angels and takes him to a happier place for the amelioration of his miserable condition, or the heavenly angel *who bears away, as it were, the enraptured soul to the blissful abodes above* and takes it back after a very long course of heavenly enjoyments to this world, or to hell itself, paying little or no attention to the sorrowful tales of the reluctant soul.

Construing together the sentences in the paragraph from the *Key to Theosophy*, we find that she says, in effect, in the later sentences on the same page, that all suffering is the direct fruit and consequence of some sin committed in a previous existence, but that as the *personality* in the life when the suffering comes has no recollection of the cause which brought it about, the punishment is *felt* by that personality to be undeserved, and another cause is thus set up which has its action in the *post mortem* condition. The difficulty raised by the objection put is that the whole matter has been made objective, and Karma has been looked upon as a material or objective law, and the *post mortem* state placed in the same category. The true Ego neither suffers nor enjoys, and is not bound at any time by Karma; but as *Devachan* is a subjective condition in which the Ego therein creates for itself out of its own thoughts the surroundings fit for it, so we may say, without at all interfering with our conceptions of Karma, that after death this Ego receives the reward for the sufferings which *it thought* were unmerited in the life just quitted. The word “unmerited” as written in *The Key* is not to be construed as being used by any Karmic power, but as the conception formed by the Ego during life of the propriety or impropriety of whatever suffering may have been then endured.

For, as we have seen in other studies, E>eyacban—the *post*

¹*Theosophist*, Vol. I, p. 199.

mortem state under consideration—is a condition wherein no objective experiences are undergone by the Ego, but in which the thoughts of a certain sort had during life act in producing about it, or rather within its sphere, the blissful subjective experiences necessary for the resting of the soul. Hence if when in the mortal frame it considered itself unjustly treated by fate or nature, it set up then and there the causes for bringing about a so-called reward for the suffering which to it seemed unmerited, just so soon as it would be released from the body and the causes be able to act in the only place or state which will permit their action.

This blissful state, as intimated in the quotation made from the *Theosophist*, is Karmic reward in the plane of Devachan. The “Karmic punishment” referred to in the *Key* is not the opposite of this, but is the opposite of Karmic reward acting on the plane of objective earth life. For the opposite of deva-chanic reward or bliss must be on a similar plane, such as the “hell” spoken of by the Buddhist priest, or Avitchi. If these distinctions are clearly borne in mind, there cannot be much difficulty with any of these questions.

To me Karma is not only judge, it is also friend and deliverer. It is essentially just. The conditions are laid down. If I comply, the result inevitably follows. It is my friend because it will, just as inevitably as life and death, give me a rest in devachan where the tired soul which needs recuperation as well as the body will find what is best for it. And a mere phrase like “unmerited suffering” invented by me in my ignorance here upon earth will be one of the factors used by this very Karma to bring about my peace and joy, albeit that still again inexorable Karma awaits me at the threshold of Devachan to mete out in my next appearance upon this terrestficial stage my just deserts. And thus on and ever on and U)^ard w§ ^hall be led from life to life and stage to stage, until at last tlie conviction: has become an inherent portion of our being that Karma is not only just but merciful.

A STUDENT

Path, March, 1891

DEVACHAN

A LETTER to the editor from Holland upon this subject deserves reply, as it must give utterance to the questions of many other students.

The complaint in this letter is that when one goes to Deya-chan much time is lost away from earth life, where otherwise unselfish work for others might be continued by instantly returning to it after death. The reason given is that Devachan is an illusion, while the so-called illusions of earthly existence are in such a sense real that they are preferable to those of Devachan. In illustration of this, the supposed case is given *dt* a parent in Devachan imagining that the beloved child is also there, when, in fact, the child not yet physically dead remains on earth perhaps in misery or leading a life of vice. This is the root of the objection—the supposed illusionary character of Devachan as compared to earth-life.

Now these feelings are always due to the thirst for life in the form which presently *ii* most known to us,—that is, in a physical body. We cannot argue Devachan away any more than we can the necessity of incarnation upon this earth; the one is as philosophically necessary as is the other. A very easy way out of the difficulty—which arises almost wholly from our feelings—would be to calmly accept the law as it stands, being willing to take whatever may be our fate, whether that be in Devachan or in this earth-life. Our likes and dislikes can have no effect on the course of nature, but they may have an effect on ourselves which will be far from beneficial. For the dwelling upon pleasure or the constant desire to fly from “pain not yet come” will inevitably create Karmic causes which we would wish to avoid.

But perhaps there are some considerations on the subject of Devachan which may be of use. In the first place, [have never believed that the period given by Mr. Sinnett in *Esoteric Buddhism* of fifteen hundred years for the stay in that state was a fixed fact in nature. It might be fifteen minutes as well as fifteen hundred years. But it is quite likely that for the majority of those who so constantly wish for a release and for an enjoyment of heaven, the period would be more than fifteen hundred years. Indeed, the Hindu Scriptures give many special ceremonies for the attainment of heaven, or the regions of Indra, which is Devachan; and those ceremonies or practices are said to cause a stay in Indraloka “for years of infinite number.”

The first question, however, must be “What is the cause for passing into Devachan?” Some have said that it is good Karma or good acts that take us and keep us there, but this is a very incomplete reply. Of course, in the sense that it is happiness to go into that state, it may be called good Karma. But it does not follow that the man whose life is good, passed in constant unselfish work for others without repining, and free from desire to have somewhere his reward, will go to Devachan. Yet his Karma must be good; it must act on him, however, in other lives, for the earth-life is the place where such Karma has its operation. But if at the same time that he is thus working for others he wishes for release or for some place or time when and where he may have rest, then, of course, he must go to Devachan for a period which will be in proportion to the intensity of those desires.

Again, it should not be forgotten that the soul must have some rest. Were it, before becoming bright as the diamond, hard as adamant, and strong as steel, to go on working, working through earth-life after earth-life without a break between, it must at last succumb to the strain and come to nothing. Nature therefore has provided for it a place of rest—in Devachan; and that we should thankfully accept if it falls to our lot.

But does Devachan suffer in the comparison made between it and this life on earth? To me it seems not. Human life is as great an illusion as any. To the sage Ribhu, Vishnu said it was the longest-lived

reign of fancy. To say that it is a terrible thing to think of a mother in Devachan enjoying its bliss while the child is suffering on earth, is to prefer one illusion over another, to hug a philosophical error to the breast. Both states are out of the true, while the Ego, who is the real witness, sees the lower personality struggling with these phantoms while it, whether the body be living or its other parts be in Devachan, enjoys eternal felicity. It sits on high unmoved, immovable. The great verse in the *Isa-Upanishad* settles this matter for me in these words: “What room is there for sorrow and what for doubt in him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind, though differing in degree.” Therefore if I believe this, I must also know that, no matter whether I and my best beloved are in Devachan or on earth, they and I must forever partake of the highest development attained by the greatest of sages, for, as they and I are spiritual beings, we must have communion forever on the higher planes of our being.

Then,-again, the fact seems to be lost sight of that each night we go into a sort of Devachan—the dream state or sleep without dream. The loving mother, no matter how unfortunate or evil her child, must sleep, and in that state she may have dreams of her loved ones around her in just the very condition of mind and body she would have them enjoy. If Devachan be objectionable, why not also rebel against our necessary sleep which acts on our physical frame to give it rest, as Devachan does upon our more ethereal parts?

Lying unnoticed at the foot of this matter is the question of time. It goes to the very root of the objection, for the aversion to the stay in Devachan is based upon the conception of a *period of time*. This period—given or supposed as 1,500 years—is another great illusion which can be easily proved to be so. What we call time, measured by our seconds and minutes and hours, is not necessarily actual time itself. It is not the ultimate precedence and succession of moments in the abstract. For us it depends on and flows from the revolution of our solar orb, and even with that standard it can be shown that we do not apprehend it correctly. We speak of seconds, but those are such as our watchmakers give us in the watch. They might be made longer or shorter. They are arrived at through a division of a diurnal

solar revolution, the observation of which is not necessarily mathematically accurate. If we lived on Mercury—where we must believe intelligent beings live—our conception of time would be different. From our childhood's experience we know that even in this life our appreciation of the passage of time rises and falls, for in early youth the 12 months from one Christmas to another seemed very, very long, while now they pass all too quickly. And from watching the mental processes in dreams we know that, in the space of time taken for a bell to drop from the table to the floor, one may dream through a whole lifetime, with all the incidents of each day and hour packed into such a limited period. Who can tell but that in a Devachanic state of three months the person may go through experiences that seem to cover thousands of years? If so, why not say for him—since time as we know it is an illusion—that he was in Devachan for those thousands?

Devachan, however, is not a meaningless or useless state. In it we are rested; that part of us which could not bloom under the chilling skies of earth-life bursts forth into flower and goes back with us to another life stronger and more a part of our nature than before; our strength is revived for another journey between deaths. Why shall we repine that nature kindly aids us in the interminable struggle; why thus ever keep the mind revolving about this petty personality and its good or evil fortune?

W.Q.J.

Path, September, 1890

MODERNIZED UPANISHAD

THE TALAVAKARA UPANISHAD

THE TEACHING OF BRAHMAN

CHAPTER FIRST¹

THE Master was asked by the pupil to tell at whose wish the mind of man, when sent forth for any act, proceeds on its errand, by whose command the first breath goeth forth, and at whose wish do men utter speech. He was also asked to tell what intelligent power directs the eye or the ear in the performance of natural functions.

The reply given by the Master, thus approached by the pupil, was that in respect to the ear, the brain, the speech of man, the breathing, and the eye, the other organs are of themselves wholly unable to act, but are the means whereby the real, but unseen, inner organs of sight, speech, hearing, seeing, and breathing obtain touch with nature, make themselves manifest, and become able to cognize outside objects.

The perfectly trained man, one fully grounded in philosophy, who has gained control of these organs both within and without, and who can locate his consciousness in the inner being, becomes really immortal when death releases him from the connection with the body. But the ordinary man, by reason of his being fully entrapped and deluded by the outer senses which are always intimately connected with the inner ones, is compelled after death to go into the Devachanic state and to return again to earthly life where he takes up a fresh set of material organs and sense connections.

¹ In the original this is called Khanda instead of chapter.

But there is another sort of consciousness which cannot be expounded to one who has not himself gained an experience of it. It is beyond description in words used on this plane. For it is different from the known, above what we suppose to be the unknown, and not that which people here adore as their highest conception of being.

Know, therefore, that the basis for the operations of the mind, of the senses, of the organs is Brahman alone. Without that we could neither taste, smell, hear, see, nor think.

SECOND CHAPTER

Then to the pupil the Master said, so as to impress it on his mind, “If thou thinkest I know the form of Brahman well, thou art not wise; but perhaps thou knowest it thyself; if so, then tell me.”

To this the pupil replied that we cannot know or describe Brahman, the substratum of all, in the ordinary manner by connecting him with some things already known to us, but at the same time we are not able to say that we do not know him. We feel the actuality of Brahman, but cannot enter into a description of it as we would of an object, by giving its known characteristics, or of a piece of land by its metes and bounds, its quality and its vegetation. The knowing of it at last, its full realization, is a species of awakening out of the present state, and then the knowledge bursts upon us. By the real Self we gain and keep strength in the interior nature, and by knowledge we become able to destroy the bonds of material reincarnation, thus attaining conscious immortality. And by knowing this, one has discovered the true aim of life. If this is not understood while a man is existing here on earth in a body, then he will be compelled to reincarnate until he does comprehend it. But the wise, who have directed their thoughts to all things, and have at last come to recognize the real Self within themselves, are possessors of conscious immortality and pass unfettered out of this life never to return.

THIRDC HAPTER

The elemental spirits of all grades that work in nature on every plane, in air, water, earth, and fire in all their correlations and

combinations, were evolved from lower and less conscious states through aeons of effort by the highest mind. This was a constant struggle between the informing power of mind and the heavy non-conscious material base which alone existed before what we now call matter had been differentiated from primordial cosmic substance. It was in ages long passed away, while the elemental model of all material things was under construction. Without the informing power, which was itself brought over from previous and incalculably distant periods of evolution, the elemental spirits would not have come into existence, as they had no power of their own to stir the depths of cosmic matter. Hence their evolution is called the “Victory of Brahman.”

They were evolved on many planes, each in a different degree² and among them were the higher order related to fire, air, and nascent mind. These being the highest were in possession of a consciousness peculiar to their own plane of existence, and were destined to become the conscious human beings of the future. But it seemed to them that they had themselves obtained the victory over cosmic substance and brought about their own evolution.

And in order to raise these cosmic spirits by gentle steps to a higher state of development, the highly progressed entities from other *Manvantaras* appeared to them on their own plane and in their own sphere of consciousness, but were not comprehended. Then the ruling spirits of fire were unable to burn, and those of air unable to move, a straw that was created before them. Next, Indra, representing the nascent power of mind and imagination, advanced toward those who came to teach, but instead of them perceived only the primordial root and basis of matter.³ For spirit as distinguished from matter cannot be perceived. It is from spirit—the eternal *purusha* that matter is emanated, and together they form the two phases of the one Absolute

² They are called devas or gods in the original.

³ In the Sanskrit this is called Mulaprakriti.

and Unknowable.

FOURTH CHAPTER

The elemental spirits had to fall down into material existence, suffer in its toils, and at last by experience gain further development through, evolution.

But in the principles of fire and air, and the thinking man, are nearest to Brahman in the eternal scheme of nature's evolution.

And as Brahman flashed forth only to at once disappear from the sight of the gods, so in like manner a knowledge of the elemental spirits in this manvantara is evanescent and itful. And in respect to the psychological being called Man, he perceives the truth either directly or by reflection. When he has perceived it by reflection, his imagination keeps the images together through the means of the eternal base which is Brahman itself. After repeated experiences of these reflections of truth he is at last able to look directly on it, and then he may become consciously immortal.

A name of Brahman is expressed by the words "The desire of it," and by that name it may be pondered upon. He who has discovered what the true aim of life is should meditate upon it and make all his desires bend to it. And as he progresses toward a knowledge of it, so all beings are insensibly impelled to aid him in the search, because there exists in all the desire to know the root of all things.

Thus you have been told the teaching of Brahman. It stands upon penance, restraint of self, and sacrifice; the Holy books are its limbs and the True is its abode. He who comprehends their entirety and subtle connection these teachings, and has shaken of all evil, has become conscious of the endless unconquerable world of spiritual knowledge.

Path, September, 1892